

An Inventory and Analysis of Local
General Plans of the Counties and Cities
in the California Desert Conservation
Area

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AN INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS OF
LOCAL GENERAL PLANS OF THE
COUNTIES AND CITIES
IN THE CALIFORNIA DESERT
CONSERVATION AREA

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Conducted for
United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
The California Desert Planning Program
Riverside, California

by
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PREFACE

One of the phases of the planning program for the preparation of the California Desert Plan involves intergovernmental coordination and the review of plans and programs of other agencies. This inventory and analysis of general plans of local governments within the CDCA is an important part of that intergovernmental coordination. The two-fold purpose of this study, which commenced in early July, 1978, was (1) to review local general plans as they pertain to the evolving California Desert Plan and (2) to encourage local planning agencies to participate in the Desert Program planning efforts.

There are 23 incorporated cities and portions of 8 counties within the 39,000 square mile California Desert Conservation Area. Interviews were arranged with key planning personnel of each of these governmental entities to discuss local planning programs and to consider areas where plans and programs of the BLM and of local government may be coordinated on a continuing basis. In most cases, copies of general plan documents were obtained during the interviews. These documents, which have been reviewed by the consultant and analyzed in this report, will become a part of the BLM library in Riverside.

The interviews revealed important information about local concerns and attitudes as they relate to the California Desert. Results of the interviews are included in the commentaries and in the concluding chapter of this report.

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I. THAT PORTION OF RIVERSIDE COUNTY WITHIN THE CALIFORNIA DESERT CONSERVATION AREA

Introduction

The easterly two-thirds of Riverside County's 7,310 square mile area lie within the California Desert Conservation Area. There are eight incorporated cities within this portion of the County. The cities are Blythe, Coachella, Desert Hot Springs, Indian Wells, Indio, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, and Rancho Mirage. This section of the report is a broad overview of the local plans of Riverside County and the aforementioned cities as they relate to the CDCA.

Riverside County

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element of the Riverside County General Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on December 13, 1965, and was referred to as the General Plan Showing Land Use-1985. It was based upon two broad categories of land use:

Urban Areas and Open Lands. About five percent of the land in the County was designated for future urban uses (Predominantly Heavy Urban, Predominantly Light Urban, and Industrial Reserve). The remainder was indicated for open space uses (Agricultural Reserve; Open Space and Other Agricultural Lands; Mountainous; and Water Problem Lands). Within the text of the Element, there is this explanation of Land Reserves which is relevant to planning for the CDCA:

All Mountainous and Water Problem Lands lying East of the Coachella Canal and the Seventh Range Line East and in the Joshua Tree National Monument are placed in the Land Reserve until such time as appropriate uses are found for them or the deficiencies are removed. For the most part, these are Federal lands.

Since 1965, there have been numerous amendments to the Land Use Element, including several area plans. The area plans which fall within the CDCA are the Cove Communities General Plan (adopted December 19, 1972), the San Gorgonio Pass General Plan (adopted July 17, 1973) and the Coachella-Thermal-Indio General Plan (amended to September 25, 1973). Another area plan, a portion of which lies within the CDCA, is the REMAP General Plan: 1990 which is expected to be adopted by the end of 1978. It is interesting to note that the various area plans present somewhat dissimilar future land use categories, and, in some cases, similar categories permit

dissimilar residential densities--particularly in the open space, or non-urban, categories. For example, the Pass Plan allows one acre per d.u. in the Agriculture and Recreation, Agriculture, Very Low Density Residential, Natural Resources categories, while the Coachella-Thermal-Indio Plan indicates a minimum d.u. site of $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres in the Agricultural Estate, Non-urban category and of 20 acres in the Agricultural Reserve category. The Cove Communities Open Space and Planned Development category indicates 3 or less d.u.'s per acre.

A recent report¹ prepared by the Planning Department proposes certain changes in the text of the Land Use Element in order to resolve some of the problems in regard to the inconsistent land use categories and to lighten the task of making zoning consistent with the General Plan. As stated in the introduction of the report, the 1965 Land Use Element

...was intended to be used as a general guide for the location of urban development. The plan was not intended to be used for consistency determinations; categories were poorly defined in terms of today's needs and are without density guidelines.... Consequently, densities have been established by tradition. It is, therefore, difficult to determine zoning consistency with the General Plan as required by State Law.

One of the recommendations of the report is that a permitted density of less than one d.u. per 20 gross acres be added to the Mountainous category, a maximum density of one d.u. per $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres be added to the Open Space and Other Agricultural Lands category, and a ten acre minimum parcel size be added to the Agricultural Reserve category. In regard to the consistency of zoning with the General Plan, the planning staff indicates that, since direct relationships between County zoning districts and land use designations do not exist, zones are generally shown as "provisionally" consistent with specific categories. At present, only a few zone classifications are truly consistent with their respective land use categories of the General Plan.

Circulation Element

A Master Plan of Highways (also known as the General Plan of Highways) was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on October 22, 1962. It consists of a map without a text. Overall, an

¹ Memorandum to the Riverside County Planning Commission from Patricia Nemeth, Planning Director; Subject: GPA 133-778-L-43, an Amendment to the Text of the Riverside County General Plan; dated July 12, 1978.

intimate relationship between the land use and circulation elements does not exist. Examples of relationship problems are to be found in the Lower Coachella Valley and the Palo Verde Valley portions of the plan where large areas of lands designated for Agricultural Reserve are overlaid with a grid network of arterials and major highways. Also, the Bradshaw Trail, which extends from the Palo Verde Valley to the Salton Sea through open space lands designated as Water Problem Lands, is indicated as an arterial with a 110 foot wide right of way.

Housing Element

A First Phase Housing Element was adopted on September 29, 1969. Following several years of staff effort, a much more complete, or second phase, of the Housing Element was adopted December 16, 1975. Recognition of the need for open space preservation is suggested in Policy 12 which states:

...that prior to implementation of any housing program developed by the County the potential destruction of regional recreation sites or important open space resources by the implementation of such a program will be taken into consideration.

Open Space and Conservation Elements

These two elements were combined into one document which was adopted June 26, 1973. The map and text are based upon seven general categories: <u>Urban Areas</u>; <u>Rural Areas</u>; <u>Agricultural Areas</u>; <u>Water Bodies and Watercourse Areas</u>; <u>Mountain, Desert, and Conservation Areas</u>; <u>Military Reservations</u>; and <u>County Regional Parks</u>. Two of the categories are of special importance to the CDCA Planning Program: <u>Rural Areas</u> and <u>Mountain</u>, <u>Desert</u>, and <u>Conservation Areas</u>. The former is described as

...intended to be used for low density residential use, light agriculture, recreation, and other compatible open space uses. Only minimal urban-type public services will be required in these areas. Within the Rural Areas, non-contiguous development that is premature and unnecessary should be discouraged.

The latter category is defined as

...lands which--because of limitations such as steep slopes, poor soils, lack of water, lack of access, lack of utilities, and their very remoteness--are generally not suitable for urbanization or even for agriculture. The mountainous areas are often heavily

brushed and constitute fire hazards. The mountains are important in relation to water conservation, plant and animal habitat, conservation of mineral resources, recreation, and even conservation of air. The desert areas are fragile, and many parts have no dependable supply of water.

A strong commitment upon the part of public agencies to a policy of not prematurely extending or developing public services, facilities, utilities, and other capital improvements into this category of open space lands will accomplish much to preclude unwarranted urbanization. To a great extent, the mountain and desert lands are in some form of public ownership. However, there are considerable private land holdings -- many of which are landlocked, such as in the BLM "checkerboard" areas East of the Coachella Canal. The Plan proposes that the public land holdings be held as open space and not be opened to development unless a careful study indicates the need to develop certain areas. The agencies controlling these open space lands are administering them under multiple use management principles which provide for open space and conservation uses such as grazing, recreation, resource conservation, and watershed. Many of the private inholdings may be considered for acquisition by the involved agency, either directly or by land exchange.

The Open Space Element includes 22 policy statements of which at least five are of special importance to the Desert Study. They are as follows:

- 1. The open space characteristics of the County, including the rivers, the mountains, the deserts, and the agricultural lands, should be controlled so that premature and indiscriminant development will not occur.
- 6. Open space lands which have the potential to provide important recreational opportunities should be protected carefully and managed wisely.
- 10. Urban development adjacent to publicly-owned open space lands should be developed in a manner which will not conflict with public open space uses.
- 15. Open space areas of unique, representative, or fragile ecologies needed for education or scientific research should be conserved.
- 18. The preservation and utilization of lands having essential mineral resources should be encouraged.

In the Conservation Element there are 16 policies listed to carry out the stated goal of managing "...the development and use of natural resources in the County in a manner that will protect and enhance the quality of the total environment." Although all of the policies relate to the Desert Study, at least seven of them deserve quotation here:

- 1. The utilization of natural resources including soil, water, vegetation, air, wildlife, and mineral resources shall be carefully controlled and managed.
- 3. Significant mineral deposit sites shall be protected, and imaginative reuse of areas where minerals have been removed shall be encouraged and promoted.
- 4. The management principle of multiple use and sustained yield in the development and use of natural resources shall be promoted and encouraged.
- 9. The protection and preservation of wildlife for the maintenance of the balance of nature shall be encouraged.
- 13. To the maximum possible extent, major drainage courses shall remain in a natural condition in order to preserve wildlife, vegetation, and scenic values.
- 14. Areas of environmental resource significance, such as wildlife habitat, unique vegetation, and historic-archaeologic values, should be identified by appropriate agencies and measures should be developed to limit uses to those compatible with the values of those areas. Pending completion of these procedures, responsible local and regional agencies should seek to limit the use of such areas.
- 15. The "wilderness experience" should be regarded as a resource to be managed, protected, and enhanced. The control of visitation and mode of transportation should be designed to conserve this resource.

The closing paragraph of the Conservation Element proposals stresses the need for sound management of the County's natural resources by pointing out that:

One need not look far to see the result of poor resource management. Scarred hillsides, eroded fields, polluted streams, and unbreathable air are some of the distressing tangible results of environmental degradation. The intangible results are the damaging psychological effects of noise, visual, and air

pollution. All improvements and enhancements of our environment are beneficial to the health and well-being of the people of this County.

Scenic Highways Element

The Scenic Highways Element was adopted September 23, 1975. Prior to that date, the Board of Supervisors authorized the planning staff to prepare plans and programs to obtain official designation of some of the eligible State Scenic Highways in the County. As a result, three sections of State Highways in Riverside County have received official State Scenic Highway designation—two of which are in the CDCA. They are: State Highway 74 from the western boundary of the San Bernardino National Forest 47.7 miles east to the junction with State Highway 111 in Palm Desert (October 18, 1971) and State Highway 62 from its junction with Interstate 10, 8.8 miles north to the San Bernardino County line (September 14, 1972).

In the introduction to the chapter on goals and policies, the point is made in support of the scenic highways program that:

No other planning program is aimed at the specific objective of protecting the "view from the road". The view can either be from a designated stretch of highway or from a road leading to a park or other recreation site. The total scenic highway system...will greatly enhance the opportunities for recreational driving.

In regard to the 14 policies of the Element, five appear to have special meaning for the Desert Study:

- 2. Scenic highway corridors shall be designed to maximize the compatible multi-purpose objectives of open space and urban planning such as: recreational driving and access to recreation sites; conservation of natural resources, including the scenic values; and protection of the public health and safety.
- 4. The Land Use Element should seek to enhance existing and planned scenic routes by indicating land uses which are not in conflict with aesthetic values within scenic corridors.
- 5. Joint efforts among federal, state, and county agencies, private developers, and citizen groups shall be encouraged to ensure compatible development within scenic corridors.

- 6. Outstanding scenic vistas and visual features shall be preserved and protected for the enjoyment of the traveling public; vista points with interpretive displays, roadside rests, and information kiosks should be developed along designated scenic highway routes.
- 11. The feasibility of incorporating riding, hiking, and bicycle trails and other compatible public recreation facilities within the scenic corridors should be investigated.

The Element proposes several new scenic highways in the CDCA, two of which are Interstate 10 from its junction with State Highway 62 to the Colorado River and State Highway 95 from its junction with Interstate 10 north to the San Bernardino County Line.

Noise Element

The Board of Supervisors adopted the Noise Element on October 21, 1975. Prior to the completion of the Element, a background report entitled <u>Riverside County General Plan Noise</u> <u>Element Research and Analysis Report</u> was prepared by the Planning Department and published in January, 1975.

In the introductory chapter of the Noise Element there is the following statement:

Riverside County is mostly a residential, recreational, and agricultural region. Some of its assets are represented by great open space, magnificent scenery, and varied residential life styles. The attractiveness of these assets to residents and visitors could be affected by intrusive noise.

Among the 15 policies presented in the Noise Element, these two have special meaning for the Desert Study:

- 1. The concept that quietness is a desirable environmental characteristic shall be recognized, and measures to control man-made noise within tolerable limits should be developed.
- 4. The use and location of off-road and other noise-producing recreational vehicles shall be carefully regulated to protect residents or users of recreational areas from excessive and unnecessary noise.

In the discussion of the relationship of the Noise Element to the Open Space and Conservation Elements another statement about noise in recreational areas merits attention: Areas of open space and recreation should provide for the psychological needs for quiet that people require. Although some outdoor recreational activities involve motorboats, motorcycles, and other noise-producing devices, acceptable noise standards can still be met when these activities are held to levels which do not impair the recreational quality of the area, or are limited to specific locations within the recreational area.

Seismic Safety and Safety Elements

In early 1974, Riverside County entered into an agreement with 12 of its 17 incorporated cities to carry out a cooperative Seismic Safety / Safety Element program. A geologic consulting firm was jointly retained to assist in completing the seismic, geologic, and flood hazards portions of these two elements. Five of the participating cities are within the CDCA (Blythe, Coachella, Desert Hot Springs, Indian Wells, and Indio).

The combined Seismic Safety and Safety Elements were adopted by the Riverside County Planning Commission on June 14, 1978, and are expected to be heard by the Board of Supervisors before the end of 1978. The Technical Report examines natural hazards within Riverside County on two levels. First, the regional aspects of seismic, geologic, and flood hazards are examined and mapped at a scale of 1" = 2 miles. The second level examines the areal extent of natural hazards on a more detailed basis and is mapped at a scale of 1" = 2000 feet. The Policy Report, as adopted by the Planning Commission, is directed at three basic groups of natural hazards: seismic-geologic, flooding, and fire. An additional section is devoted to a program to assure adequate preparedness and response in the event of a natural disaster.

The maps showing seismic hazards and 100-year flood plains indicate that the western half of the County is much more seriously affected by these natural hazards than the eastern half. However, the Coachella Valley which is indicated on the western maps, has some serious problems in regard to seismic and flood hazards.

In regard to seismic hazards as they relate to the CDCA, Policy 1 of the Seismic and Geologic Hazards Policy Plan is worth quoting here: "Recognize seismic and geologic hazards as significant constraints when determining suitable land uses and densities within an area." An example of a hazardous area is the San Andreas Fault Zone which extends in a northwest-southeast direction through the Coachella Valley.

In regard to flood hazards within the CDCA in Riverside County,

The Flood Hazard Policy Plan comments on the Whitewater River as follows:

The Whitewater River originates on the mountainous slopes bordering the Coachella Valley and flows generally southward into the Salton Sea. It receives sizeable contributions from its tributaries during periods of heavy runoff, but it is completely dry throughout most of the year. Like most desert rivers, its course sometimes meanders, causing the width and depth to vary.

Runoff following precipitation in the desert mountains is usually quite rapid due to the steep slopes and the absence of large stands of water-holding vegetation. Therefore, after a thundershower, dry streambeds can quickly fill with water, creating the possibility of flash floods.

These policies should be of value to planning in the CDCA:

- 1. Recognize hazards posed by flooding or dam inundation as significant constraints when determining suitable land uses and densities within an area.
- 4. No critical or essential facility should be permitted to locate within the boundaries of the 100-year flood plain unless no alternative sites are available and it is demonstrated that although mitigation is extremely difficult, all hazards will be mitigated.
- 5. Encourage the preservation of flood plains in open space uses.

The Fire Hazard Policy Plan includes comments on the fire hazards in open space areas and points to the fact that in Riverside County there are:

...extensive areas of open space, mostly mountain ranges and desert. These areas are a valuable resource; however, rugged topography, dry weather, and large areas of highly flammable brush combine with increasing numbers of people to create extreme fire hazards throughout a large part of the County....

Two of the Fire Hazard Policies deserve attention in relation to the CDCA:

5. Recognize susceptibility to wildland fire as a significant constraint when determining suitable

land uses and densities within an area.

8. Discourage small lot development in areas of High or Extreme fire hazard where there is no adequate and reliable source of water provided.

Recreation Element

The Recreation Element of the County General Plan was adopted on June 21, 1965. It was referred to as <u>The Master Plan of Recreation</u>, and the text emphasized that it was a "Plan of Regional Recreation" which was intended to show

...only sites and areas of regional significance-those which are important in the Southern California
scene. Community and neighborhood parks and playgrounds are needed to supplement these, and provision for them should be made on district and community plans.

Early in the report, there is this reference to BLM lands:

Extensive recreational areas occur on lands in the Public Domain and under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management. These lands have been classified by the Bureau for Recreation and Public Purposes and are available for \$2.50 an acre to governmental agencies that will protect their natural features...

The Plan established two categories of recreational use "...to preserve this valuable Open Space as a continuing resource." The categories are Recreation Ways and Reservations. Within the CDCA, the Whitewater River north of State Highway 111 is indicated as a Recreation Way. A Reservation is defined as "...a large natural or rural area possessing valuable scenic Open Space qualities similar to a Recreation Way but without the stream interest." Part of the Whitewater River north of Palm Springs is shown as a Reservation as are many other desert areas such as the Indio Hills, Mecca Hills, Corn Springs, Chuckwalla Well, Wiley Well, and Quien Sabe Point along the Colorado River north of Blythe.

Scores of Recreational Sites and Areas are shown in the Coachella Valley Region and in the East County Region. They include picnic areas, campgrounds, roadside parks, nature interest sites, cultural and historic sites, and other types of recreational facilities.

In the discussion of the East County Region, there are these statements which are relevant to the CDCA:

A huge portion of the East County Region is in the Public Domain and from this several large parks are provided. Study should be given to increasing the size or of joining these together at least until more definite trends or needs for desert urban development are needed....

The question has been raised whether some higher level of government should administer the great desert parks. A high percentage of the users will be from without Riverside County and it is questionable whether wide spread parks will pay expenses and therefore the state or federal government should bear the expense...

The Board of Supervisors amended the Recreation Element on November 4, 1968, by adding a new section entitled General Plan of Equestrian and Hiking Trails. Many miles of these proposed trails are in the CDCA portion of the County.

Public Services and Facilities Element

On October 16, 1973, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Riverside County Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan as a part of the Public Services and Facilities Element. The Plan provides a concept of water and wastewater systems:

...appropriate to serve the needs of the people living in the planning area to the year 1990. The Plan is intended to be a framework which will lead to adequate domestic water and wastewater systems serving areas of urbanization within the County....

Areas of urbanization projected to the year 1990 are delineated within each "planning zone". Within the CDCA portion of the County, in addition to the Palm Springs-Cathedral City-Rancho Mirage-Palm Desert-Indian Wells-Indio-Coachella Complex, the areas of urbanization include the Desert Hot Springs area, the Thousand Palms area, the Thermal area, the Mecca area, the North Shore area, the Kaiser Mine Service area, the Desert Center area, the Mesa Verde area, the Ripley area, the Blythe area, and a small recreational development northeast of the City of Blythe.

The maps depict the water and sewer lines, wells, reservoirs, force mains, lift stations, booster stations, and treatment plants which will be required to serve the urbanized areas to the year 1990.

Commentary

Once the Seismic Safety and Safety Elements are adopted by the Board of Supervisors, the Riverside County General Plan will be complete in terms of the inclusion of the nine elements required by California planning laws. However, not all of these elements are up to date nor do they all meet the State advisory guidelines for local general plans. Review of the elements and interviews with key personnel suggest that the Land Use and Circulation Elements are those that are most in need of up-dating and revision. Also, much work needs to be done to bring the zoning ordinance into consistency with the General Plan. Recently, in response to some of these needs, the Planning Department has prepared a list of recommended changes to the text of the General Plan which should prove to be beneficial to the County planning process.

At present, the degree of commitment to the General Plan on the part of County decision-makers is moderate. In regard to growth control or growth management, the decision-makers tend to regard growth as beneficial and are not inclined toward placing significant restrictions on growth in the County.

In regard to concerns about the CDCA planning program, it seems safe to say that there is considerable interest on the part of elected officials, appointed officials, and the general public in becoming actively involved in the preparation of a comprehensive plan for the California Desert. This interest is understandable, since two-thirds of Riverside County is within the CDCA and much private land is intermingled or close to Federal lands within the County. Principal concerns include transmission line corridors, off-the-road vehicle activity, energy plant siting, historical-archaeological sites, and wild life preservation. There is also significant interest in desert sites for alternate forms of energy such as solar, geothermal, and wind.

City of Blythe

<u>Introduction</u>

The City of Blythe is located about three miles west of the Colorado River and lies in the broad, flat Palo Verde Valley --an important agricultural area. Although the natural slope is well under one percent, there are numerous hills and mountain ranges within a radius of ten miles of the City.

The area of the City is 2.3 square miles, and the population as of February, 1978 was 7,274. The adopted Sphere of Influence covers approximately 16 square miles, and there are no

BLM lands within the Sphere. The rate of population growth is relatively slow, being less than .5 percent per year during the period 1970-78.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element is part of a report prepared by a consulting firm and was entitled <u>City of Blythe General Plan</u>. The report was presented to the City in early 1970, but it has not been formally adopted by the City Council. The Plan included proposed elements for land use, circulation, housing, community facilities, and recreation.

The proposed Land Use Element consists of a discussion of existing land use and a zoning inventory. Future land uses are indicated on the General Plan map which establishes an urban limits line around the existing city limits, with agriculture as the primary use in most of the remaining Sphere of Influence. A moderate annual growth rate of less than 2 percent was forecast to the year 1990. Although there are no specific goals and policies for the Land Use Element, there is a separate section on overall goals and objectives in the introduction of the General Plan. Two of the objectives relate to land use and to the CDCA:

-to maintain and encourage the best possible use of agricultural land, protecting it against premature encroachment of non-agricultural development

-to preserve and encourage desirable land relationships.

Circulation Element

The proposed Circulation Element is based upon the Riverside County Circulation Element (General Plan of Highways). The text includes some standards for the road system and a traffic analysis. The map indicates a system of streets and highways to match that pattern shown on the County Plan. Circulation goals and objectives are presented in the introduction of the General Plan. One of the objectives is "...to plan for long-range circulation needs by adoption of the Riverside County Master Plan of Highways as part of the General Plan". The pattern is basically the same in the urban areas as it is in the surrounding open space areas.

Housing Element

The proposed Housing Element is one of the most complete elements in the General Plan. It includes discussions of costs of housing, housing conditions, vacancies, housing shortages, housing needs, and various housing and home financing programs.

It appears, however, to require up-dating to consider present conditions and to conform to the new State guidelines for preparation of a housing element.

Open Space and Conservation Elements

The Open Space and Conservation Elements are parts of a proposed Environmental Resource and Management Element which was prepared by a consulting firm and which has not yet been adopted by the City Council.

The part on Open Space includes sections on open space principles, goals, and objectives. One of the stated principles is:

To protect public safety by reserving flood plains, flood control channels, earthslide and seismic fault zones, fire breaks, etc., and employ them for safe non-disastertime open space.

The section on open space goals and objectives is based on eight categories under which the goals and objectives are listed. The categories are (a) Economic, (b) Protection, Safety, and Regulation, (c) Health, (d) Community Environment and Support, (e) Education, (f) Transportation, (g) Recreation, and (h) Social Involvement. The series of objectives listed under Protection, Safety, and Regulation are particularly pertinent to planning for the CDCA:

To gain acceptance of government conservation and regulatory action, and to maintain order and harmony in the region by: protecting urbanized areas from fire, flood, earthquake, mud slide and other disasters; preventing loss through destruction, neglect, or misuse of irreplaceable natural resources, providing facilities, controls, and instructions for the safety and well-being of those using open space lands; protect related open space lands under the control of governmental agencies; maintain flood control reservoirs, drainage channels, and airport flight path zones; encourage land uses that will protect air and water quality, eliminate noise pollution, and prevent erosion of soils and silting of waterways; uphold quality development with balanced and integrated land use pattern and an equitable process for resolving conflicts in use of open space lands.

The part on Conservation also includes a section on goals and objectives. The statements under the heading of Recreation are worth quoting here:

To provide natural resource recreation and cultural

lands in adequate quantity and quality so that each and all citizens can attain refreshment of strength and spirit in a manner of their own choice, collectively or individually. To protect and develop flood plains, channels, sanitary landfills, reservoirs, water recharge areas, and natural preserves so as to provide important recreational uses without unintended negative influences on either the resource, the welfare of society, or the individual. To develop a multiple use program that will supplement or support natural resource conservation.

The Open Space and Conservation map presents three categories of open space and conservation use: <u>Urban Reserve</u>, <u>Permanent Open Space (Agriculture)</u>, and <u>Restricted Open Space</u>. The latter category is applied to the strip of land along the Colorado River which is within the approximate boundary of the 100-year flood plain.

Scenic Highways Element

The Scenic Highways Element was adopted by the City Council on November 1, 1977. Background information for this element is presented in the Scenic Highways Element Research and Analysis Report, dated May, 1977.

In the introduction of the Element, the scenic resources surrounding the City of Blythe are described:

The area in which the City of Blythe is located is well-endowed with scenic resources which range from level, carefully-tended agricultural lands to surrounding rugged desert mountains. These scenic resources contribute toward a pleasant living environment for residents of Blythe as well as to serve as a recreational attraction for tourists.

One of the 14 policies is important to CDCA planning:

13. Efforts shall be made to improve scenic highway coordination among all levels of government, including special districts, the City, the County, the State, and the Federal.

One of the implementation measures for the Element pertains to planning for the CDCA:

Because the Scenic Highway System for the City of Blythe relates to State and County highways, special districts, and federal lands, it is important that there be continuing cooperation and coordination among the various levels of government. The views from the highways often cross boundaries of several governmental jurisdictions, and if scenic views are to be enhanced and preserved, the various levels of involved governments must work harmoniously toward that end.

The Element proposes several portions of the local highway system within the City and its Sphere of Influence as part of the scenic highways plan. Two of them are part of the Riverside County Scenic Highways System: Interstate 10 and State Highway 95.

Noise Element

The City Council adopted the Noise Element on November 1, 1977. The Noise Element Research and Analysis Report dated May, 1977 was prepared to serve as a supporting technical document for the Element.

The Element includes 15 policy statements on noise. Perhaps one of the most pertinent to the CDCA is Policy 1: "The quality of the environment shall be improved by the reduction and control of noise."

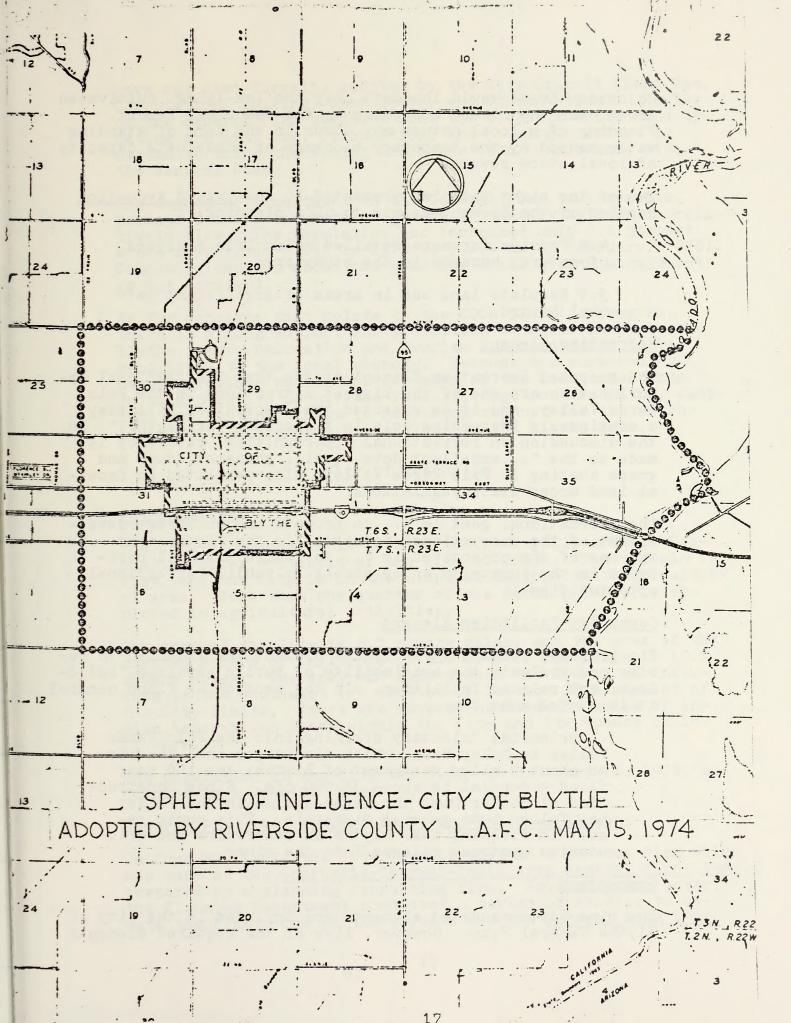
In the discussion of the relationships between the Noise Element and the Open Space Element there is this statement:

Excessive noise is not compatible with the enjoyment of recreational pursuits in designated open space areas, and for that reason, noise levels must be recognized when planning for passive recreation open space....

Seismic Safety and Safety Elements

The City of Blythe was one of the 12 cities that participated with the County of Riverside in a cooperative Seismic Safety/Safety Element program. On November 1, 1977, the City Council adopted the Seismic Safety and Safety Elements. Detailed information regarding geologic, seismic, flood, and inundation hazards for the Blythe Area is contained in the County of Riverside Seismic Safety and Safety Elements Technical Report, dated September, 1976, which was prepared by a geologic consulting firm.

No "active" or "potentially active" faults are known to be located within or in close proximity to the City of Blythe. Secondary hazards, such as liquefaction and seiching, are not considered as significant in and around the City. However, settlement may be a problem because of the poorly consolidated river sediments on which the City has been built. Flooding that might occur during a 100-year storm (75,000 cfs on the



Colorado River) would inundate only the low-lying, cultivated areas near the river, according to the Technical Report. Flooding of a local nature may occur in the form of standing water caused by the temporary blockage or inadequate capacity of local storm sewers.

Two of the eight policies presented in the <u>Hazard Reduction</u> section of the Element relate to CDCA planning:

- 4.0 Provide for more detailed scientific analyses of natural hazards in the study area.
- 5.0 Regulate land use in areas of significant natural hazard.

Recreation Element

The proposed Recreation Element states that "Recreational opportunities are one of the biggest attractions in the Palo Verde Valley, and it is expected that recreation will play a continually increasing role in the economy of Blythe." In the discussion on recreational opportunities, reference is made to the "...excellent dove, quail, pheasant, duck and goose hunting in Palo Verde Valley; also permitted on federal land under state regulations."

The recreational goal is "...to promote and encourage development of the recreational potential in the Blythe area...", and one of the objectives is "...to insure that all residents in the community enjoy access to public recreational opportunities."

Community Facilities Element

The proposed Community Facilities Element was intended to review and evaluate the availability of public services, buildings, and related facilities. In the section on flood control it is stated that the:

...principal tributary draining into the Palo Verde Valley is McCoy Wash, which discharges into the river about 3 miles northwest of Blythe; the 100 year flood potential is about 35,000 cfs. Since construction of Hoover Dam, the levee system in the Valley has fallen into general disrepair. This could result in flooding near Blythe as reservoirs and tributaries upstream release into the river....

Commentary

The nine State-mandated elements are included in the City of Blythe General Plan. However, five of the required elements

have not been formally adopted by the City Council (Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Open Space, and Conservation). Review of the General Plan suggests that the elements which need updating are Land Use, Circulation, and Housing. Effort is needed to bring the zoning ordinance into consistency with the General Plan.

The degree of commitment to the General Plan is temperate, perhaps because the rate of growth in the Blythe area is relatively slow. The population has increased only 3.2 percent since 1970 (from 7,047 in 1970 to 7,274 as of February, 1978). Community concern about the need for local growth management is not apparent.

As for concerns that relate to the CDCA planning program, there is strong support for protection of agriculture in the Blythe area. Recreation and tourism are considered to be beneficial to the local economy. Because the surrounding desert provides recreation for many of the local residents in such pursuits as off-the-road driving, rock-hounding, camping, and hunting, there is no strong support for the establishment of wilderness areas close to the Blythe area.

City of Coachella

Introduction

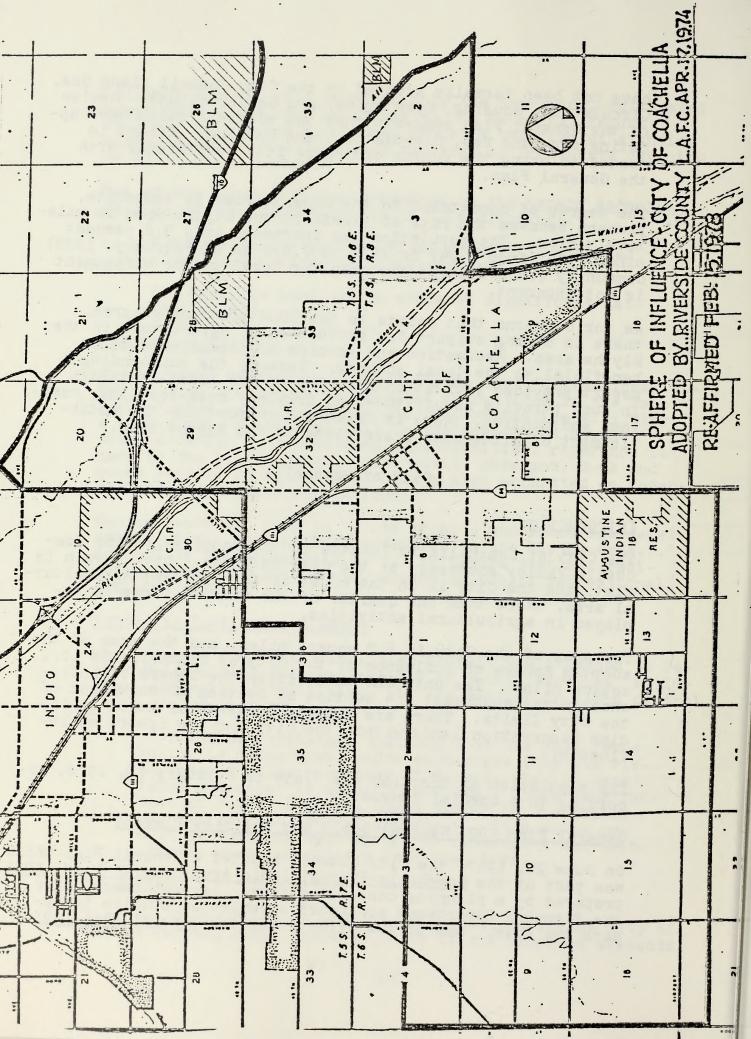
The City of Coachella is located in the rapidly-growing Coachella Valley southeast of the City of Indio. The terrain is flat, and the City is in the midst of an important agricultural area. More than one quarter of the working force is employed in agricultural activities.

The area of the City is 8.7 square miles, and the area of the adopted Sphere of Influence of the City of Coachella is 19.1 square miles. The only BLM land within the Sphere of Influence is the southeast 1/4 section of Section 28 northeast of the City limits. There are several hundreds of acres of Indian Reservation lands within the City and its Sphere of Influence.

The population of the City was 8,654 on February 13, 1978, according to a Special Census.

General Plan 1995 General Goals and Policies Element

On June 20, 1967, the City Council adopted a General Plan which was part of the <u>Coachella-Thermal-Indio Area General Plan: 1985</u>, prepared by a planning consulting firm. Several years later, the Planning Department conducted a series of studies to update the Plan. One of the efforts was the <u>General Plan 1995</u>



General Goals and Policies Element which was adopted December 3, 1974. As stated in the introduction, the studies were needed because:

...there have been annexations, developments and zoning amendments that have resulted in inconsistencies between the General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. State law requires that the Zoning Ordinance be consistent with the General Plan by January 1, 1974 or as soon thereafter as possible.

Within the list of 16 General Goals and Objectives, there are at least four which directly relate to CDCA planning:

- 6. To preserve the cultural, scenic, historical, and natural aspects of our area.
- 7. To provide the best possible environment for all residents.
- 9. To analyze natural resources and plan their proper utilization.
- 10. To regulate development in areas which are considered to be hazardous.

Among the 19 major policies at least two appear to be pertinent to the CDCA Program:

- 6. All efforts shall be made to protect and expand open space and efforts should be made to perpetuate the full range of plant types and wild life.
- 16. To augment the existing economic base by the utilization of various implementation measures that capitalize on the recreational and tourist aspects of the area.

Land Use Element

The revised Land Use Element was adopted December 3, 1974. It is based upon considerations of the "optimum" population for the City, and, as stated in the section on Rate of Growth "... we shall not establish our growth policy in the manner that many municipalities have done in the past and despoil the natural beauty of the land."

In the section on General Development Goals, concern for preservation of agricultural lands is expressed by this policy statement: "Inefficient external growth is not a city policy. It is a policy to control and phase urban growth by preserving prime agricultural lands and protecting them from urban

intrusion." Another policy which relates to open space land use is: "All efforts should be made to protect prime agricultural lands, areas of natural resource or scenic beauty."

Two of the five policies for <u>Public Facilities Land Use</u> also apply to open space:

- a. Allocate sufficient acreage in optimum patterns of open space to provide maximum enjoyment to all residents.
- b. The location of facilities should strive to enhance or preserve historical, cultural and scenic aspects.

The residential category of <u>Very Low</u> indicates a range of 0-two d.u.'s per acre and is intended for application "...on the outskirts of the 1995 urban areas...". Although a maximum density for the <u>Agriculture</u> category is not stated in the text or on the map, the Agriculture Zone requires a minimum 40 acre parcel size.

Circulation Element

The new Circulation Element was adopted on December 3, 1974. Recognition of the effect that transportation may have upon the environment is indicated in the section on <u>Circulation Needs and Issues</u>: "...transportation modes have impacts on biotic communities, air quality, scenic values, and other environmental aspects."

Under <u>Goals and Policies</u> one of the stated goals is: "To discourage the indiscriminate usage of open space areas." One of the policies is: "Cooperation with all responsible authorities in the designating of accessways to open space areas. This is an effort to aid in the preservation of the natural beauty of the area."

The Circulation Element is sensitive to the difference in circulation system needs in rural areas as opposed to urban areas. In the <u>Description of Proposed Circulation Systems</u>, there is the following statement:

Urban and rural areas have fundamentally different characteristics as to density and types of land use, density of street and highway networks, nature of travel patterns, and in the relationship of these elements in the highway functions. This explains why there is a need for a separate classification of urban and rural functional systems.

Housing Element

On September 17, 1974, the City Council adopted the Housing Element. One of the findings of the housing studies was that "...a sizable percentage (49%) of the families in and around Coachella can be classified as 'low-income' in terms of ... ability to find adequate housing."

The Element proposes several planning and implementing actions to cope with some of the housing problems. Some of the problems in housing are:

- . A rapid deterioration of existing older structures.
- . A shortage of all types of housing throughout the city.
- . Inexperienced home purchasers unaware of the many pitfalls of home ownership.
- . A decrease in the percentage of residents able to afford a new home as a result of higher cost.

Open Space and Conservation Element

The Open Space and Conservation Element was adopted July 23, 1973. Because agriculture is a mainstay of the economy of the City of Coachella, heavy emphasis is placed upon preservation of agricultural open space. There are several hundred acres of land in agricultural preserves within the Sphere of Influence of the City, and the text of the Element supports the Williamson Act as a method of saving agriculture.

The Element proposes five categories of open space: Agricultural, Fault Zone, Cultural, Public Safety, and Existing.

The category of <u>Agricultural Open Space</u> is intended for lands best suited for agriculture with the expectation that agriculture in the Coachella Valley "... is expected to expand, both in terms of total acreage, value of production per acre, and number of employees."

Fault Zone Open Space is proposed to be applied to the land within the San Andreas Fault Special Studies Zone which is northeast of the City and along the northeast boundary of the City's Sphere of Influence. Uses would be limited to recreation and agriculture.

The category of <u>Cultural Open Space</u> is intended for applicacation to the Indian Reservation Lands. As stated in the discussion of the need to preserve the cultural heritage of the area:

To this end, the City of Coachella will turn its attention toward preserving those lands, both within and close to the city limits, which are designated as Indian Reservation land. This land holds special importance to the area because it contains both natural flora and fauna, and important areas set aside as cemetaries or traditional burial grounds, as well as possible archaeologically interesting areas.

The category of <u>Public Safety Open Space</u> is intended for application to "...various areas around the Thermal Airport."

Existing Open Space is the category to be used for lands in agricultural preserve contracts, existing public parks, and lands "...directly underneath the high voltage lines carrying electricity into the area." Recreation and agricultural are the proposed uses for the latter lands.

Scenic Highways Element

On July 19, 1977, the City Council adopted a Scenic Highways Element. As stated in the introduction of the Element: "... The many natural and manmade resources which the area possesses are accessible by public roads, but it remains the responsibility of every level of government to preserve these areas for the enjoyment of all residents and visitors...."

One of the policies in the section on <u>Goals and Policies</u> stresses coordination in planning for scenic highways: "e. The participation with all jurisdictions in programs relating to scenic highways, scenic corridors, and scenic vistas."

The Element proposes a system of scenic routes, scenic corridors, and scenic vistas which is "...in agreement with the recommendations of CVAG (Natural Resources Committee), the City of Indio, and of the Scenic Highways Element of the Riverside County General Plan."

Noise Element

The Noise Element was adopted July 19, 1977. The need for the Element is indicated in the introduction which states in part:

The area is noted as a tourist, residential, recreational, and agricultural region with which are associated open space, scenic splendor, citrus orchards, date groves, and passive and active forms of recreation. These assets would be greatly affected by the intrusive effects of noise, so the adoption and implementation of a noise element would be beneficial to all inhabitants and have a positive effect upon the economy.

In the section on Goals and Policies, five noise goals and nine noise policies are listed. One of the policies pertains to environmental effects: "f. Recognition should be made of the adverse effect of noise on the environmental aspects of the society."

Seismic Safety and Public Safety Elements

The City of Coachella was one of the 12 cities that participated with the County of Riverside in a cooperative Seismic Safety/Safety Element program. On July 19, 1977, the City Council adopted the Seismic Safety and Public Safety Elements. Detailed information regarding seismic and flood hazards for the Coachella area is presented in the County of Riverside Seismic Safety and Safety Elements Technical Report, dated September, 1976, which was prepared by a geologic consulting firm.

In regard to seismic hazards, the Element reports that:

The geologic and seismic setting of the City of Coachella is dominated by the proximity of the San Andreas Fault...both as the location of ground rupture should fault movement reach the surface and as a source of a damaging earthquake that would accompany movement on this fault....

Very strong to severe ground shaking is expected in Coachella as a result of earthquakes originating on the San Andreas fault, and liquefaction is a significant hazard in a large part of the Coachella-Thermal area. Settlement is also a potential hazard.

In regard to flooding, large scale flood hazards resulting from a 100-year storm are not a threat to the City of Coachella. Also, the City generally is not subject to inundation associated with failure of local dams or reservoirs.

One of the Implementation Recommendations of the Seismic Safety Element is pertinent to the CDCA Program:

5.1 No development should be permitted in the San Andreas Fault Hazard Management Zone until a detailed geological evaluation of the surface rupture potential of the fault is completed and adequate building set-backs from the fault are established.

Commentary

Considerable effort has been made to maintain and up-date the City of Coachella General Plan. All of the nine State-mandated elements have been adopted. An Economic Study is

underway, and efforts to accomplish pre-zoning in the City's Sphere of Influence are being made.

Commitment to the Plan appeals to be stronger among the appointed officials than it is among members of the public, who tend to be somewhat apathetic toward the local planning process. The rate of population increase has been modest since 1970, and there is no sense of urgency in the community in regard to the need for growth-management.

In regard to concerns about the CDCA planning program, there is awareness of the need for coordination in planning efforts among all levels of government. Although there is support for preservation of environmental quality, the overriding concerns are based on economics. The strong support of programs to keep viable agriculture in the Coachella area is attributable to the desire to keep farm-related employment at a high level rather than to preserve green open space.

City of Desert Hot Springs

Introduction

The City of Desert Hot Springs is a recreation-health resortretirement type of community located in the northern part of the Coachella Valley. Two of its assets are hot mineral waters and the dry desert climate. The City lies on a gently sloping alluvial plain which is subject to sheet flow during periods of high storm run-off.

The area of the City is 8.3 square miles, and the adopted Sphere of Influence encompasses almost 26 square miles. There are approximately two sections of BLM land adjacent to the northeast limits line of the City.

The population of the City as of February 13, 1978 was 4,252 which is an increase of 55.3 percent over the 1970 population of 2,738. This represents a much higher growth rate than that for the County as a whole for the same period.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element is part of the <u>Desert Hot Springs 1985</u> General Plan which was prepared by a planning consulting firm. The Plan, which also included a Circulation Element, a Public Facilities Element, and a Drainage Element, was adopted by the City Council on March 20, 1968. In 1974, another consulting firm prepared a new report on the General Plan which was intended to be "...a summary of changes which have occurred from 1968 to the present and presents new directions for the City."

Land use goals and objectives are included in a separate section in the original Plan entitled <u>Plan Objectives and Principles</u>; five of these relate to the CDCA:

- 1. Capitalize on and develop the great resort and tourism potential of the Desert Hot Springs area. Encourage the construction of more active resort facilities to supplement the relatively passive type of facility that presently predominates.
- 2. Create an environment based on the unique desert quality that will appeal to tourist use as well as guarantee the tranquility desired by the permanent residents.
- 5. Promote the economic advancement of Desert Hot Springs through the expansion of tourism, and the provisions of additional facilities for the tourist and recreationist.
- 20. Develop the tourist and recreational resources of the area in a manner consistent with the innate values so as to protect the beauty of these elements.
- 21. Be sensitive to, and respect in development decisions, the desert quality that is unique and the underlying basis for growth.

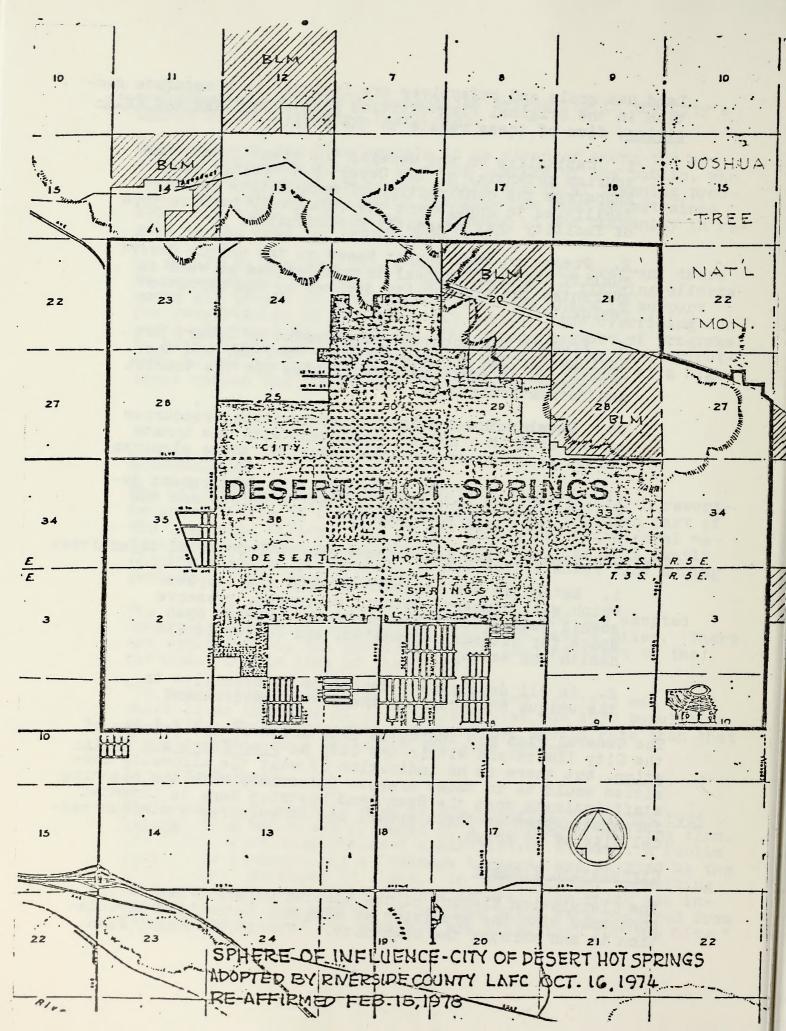
The 1974 Summary Plan added these two environmental objectives:

- 1. Establish and maintain an open space system which will conserve natural resources, preserve scenic beauty, define urban form, provide open space for outdoor recreation, and foster public health and safety.
- 2. In all development decisions be sensitive to the unique character of the desert environment.

The General Plan map indicates some areas on the fringes of the City limits and within the City as <u>Open Space and Recreation</u>, but there is no indication of what the allowable densities would be in those areas. Interviews with the planning staff indicate that the Open Land District Zone is intended for application to these areas, and it requires a minimum parcel size of $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres.

Circulation Element

The Circulation Element of the adopted General Plan "...is concerned with the provision of adequate automobile circulation in and through the community." The 1974 Summary Plan



states that the Element "...is concerned with the provision of automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle paths in and through the community...."

One of the <u>Objectives</u> that applies to the Circulation Element is:

A scenic street system should be designed which provides a satisfying recreation experience to the tourist, providing views of the Valley and other attractions, and with careful and sensitive consideration of esthetic factors.

In the circulation proposals there is this explanatory statement:

The general plan map contains a distinction between "urban" and "non-urban" streets in the circulation system. This distinction is intended to illustrate that these streets may not be needed to serve the 1985 population but the rights-of-way should be preserved in the course of development....

Housing Element

The City of Desert Hot Springs does not have a housing element. However, the 1985 Plan includes a discussion of housing characteristics, and housing types.

Open Space and Conservation Elements

The Open Space Element and the Conservation Element were adopted on June 3, 1978. The documents are almost identical to the Riverside County Open Space and Conservation Elements except that the land use categories are different. The categories used by the City of Desert Hot Springs are Open Space for the Preservation of Natural Resources, Open Space for the Managed Production of Resources, Open Space for Outdoor Recreation, and Open Space for Public Health and Safety.

Scenic Highways Element

The Scenic Highways Element was adopted on June 3,1978. The scenic resources of the City are described in the section on Assets:

The City of Desert Hot Springs area has been richly endowed with a physical setting which offers its citizens and visitors a rich scenic experience, a mixture of climate, topography, flora and fauna, together with a historical and cultural heritage. To

the north of the City are the Yucca Hills which provide a scenic border for the City and the entire northern Coachella Valley. The sloping alluvial surface upon which the City is built offers magnificent views of the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa mountains south across the valley floor and San Gorgonio Mountain to the west. There is also the panorama of the valley floor itself....

In the section on <u>Statement of Policies</u>, four of the policies are of special interest to the CDCA program:

- 4. Establish and maintain rural scenic highways to provide access to scenic resources and serve recreational users.
- 8. Remove visual pollution from designated scenic highway corridors.
- 10. Increase governmental commitment to the designation of scenic highways and protection of scenic corridors.
- 13. Improve scenic highway coordination and implementation procedures between all levels of government.

Noise_Element

On June 3, 1978, the City Council adopted the Noise Element. In the section on <u>Assets</u>, there are these comments on the need for protection from excessive noise:

The City of Desert Hot Springs has several assets which, if preserved and utilized, can improve the quality of life for its citizens. These assets include existing low noise level areas, available technology, and economic influence.

One of man's most important needs is silence, or a reasonable measure of solitude. Most areas of the city (generally underdeveloped or low density residential development) have existing noise levels which are significantly less than those found in typical high density urban development. These areas represent an asset in that their present noise levels are low enough to provide a reasonable level of quiet. They do need, however, to be protected against future noise level increases.

The value of preserving quietness in open space areas is stated in the section on <u>Opportunities</u>:

Although the greatest effort is needed in the noisy urban areas, the controlled development (using land use controls) of undeveloped and low density areas will enable the quiet of these areas to be preserved without large capital expenditures for noise mitigation measures. Whereas the effort in the developed urban areas must be one of reduction, it is one of prevention in the undeveloped and low density areas.

Two of the policies presented under <u>Statement of Policies</u> are pertinent to planning for the CDCA:

- 7. Coordinate with federal, state, county, and other city governments in developing and implementing noise abatement programs.
- 14. Consider the development of quiet zones in special areas of the City. All forms of noise would be controlled so people could visit the area and enjoy solitude as part of their leisure.

Seismic Safety and Safety Elements

The City of Desert Hot Springs was one of 12 cities that participated with the County of Riverside in a cooperative Seismic Safety/Safety Elements program. On June 3, 1978, the City Council adopted the Safety Element, but has not yet adopted the Seismic Safety Element. Detailed information regarding geologic, seismic, and flood hazards is presented in the County of Riverside Seismic Safety and Safety Elements Technical Report, dated September, 1976, which was prepared by a geologic consulting firm.

In regard to seismic hazards, the <u>Technical Report</u> states in part:

The seismic setting of the Desert Hot Springs area is dominated by the presence of the "active" Mission Creek branch of the San Andreas fault.... This fault not only poses the problem of fault rupture in the developed part of the City, but also is the likely source of very strong to severe ground shaking as a result of any fault movement....

Very strong to severe ground shaking is expected in the Desert Hot Springs area as a result of earthquakes originating on the Mission Creek fault. Liquefaction is not considered a potential hazard. Settlement, on the other hand, may be a problem. Landslides and slope instability are a relatively minor hazard in the area. Seiching may present a hazardous situation in water storage tanks on hillside locations above developed areas.

In regard to flooding in the Desert Hot Springs area, the <u>Technical Report</u> presents the following conclusions:

- 1. A potential for flooding exists in the Desert Hot Springs area along major wash systems emanating from the mountains to the north.
- 2. Areas to the south of the City have a propensity for sheet flooding during periods of heavy runoff.
- 3. The Study Area is not subject to inundation associated with failure of local dams or reservoirs.

In the section on <u>Statement of Policies</u> in the Safety Element, four policies relate to the CDCA program:

- 5. Develop stringent site criteria for construction in areas with fire and/or geologic problems and prohibit construction if these criteria are not met.
- 6. Restrict widespread urban development in identified brush fire hazard areas.
- 7. Encourage continued research in the fields of geologic and fire safety.
- 15. Increase cooperation and coordination between the various jurisdictions and agencies involved in fire protection and the mitigation of geologic problems.

In the section on the <u>Implementation Program</u> in the Safety Element, there is a statement on brush fire hazards which pertains to planning for the CDCA:

Through the fire hazard reduction programs sponsored by the State and Resource Conservation Districts a number of methods have been used to eliminate or reduce the impact of brush fires including type conversion, fire and fuel breaks, and controlled burning. While these programs have been generally effective in performing their function, some have still been criticized for not demonstrating adequate environmental sensitivity.

Zoning Regulations could be an effective tool in restricting urbanization in identified brush fire areas....

Recreation Element

Although a Recreational Element is not an adopted element of the Desert Hot Springs General Plan, a <u>Master Park Plan</u>, dated

July, 1977, was prepared for the City by a planning consulting firm. It includes sections on population characteristics; an inventory of park and recreation facilities; park demand and needs; and a master park plan.

In the <u>Introduction</u>, there is the following statement on open space:

Open space is the vehicle with which recreational needs are satisfied when it provides a variety of locations and activities for human leisure activities. Within urbanized areas, open space has become an increasingly scarce resource that we can no longer afford to mismanage. Traditionally, open space has been thought to include undeveloped natural terrain such as mountains, riverbeds, and hill-sides. Within an urban context, smaller areas such as playgrounds, cemeteries, and parks are considered to be open space....

Under the heading of <u>The Master Park Plan</u> there is this statement explaining the functions of the Plan:

The primary function of the master park plan is to guide the city in its future park acquisition and development process through the next ten to twenty year period. It should contain an analysis of park land demand, locational considerations, design concepts, graphics, and development priorities. Secondarily, the plan will provide additional data that can be incorporated into future revisions of the city's General Plan, particularly the Open Space and Conservation Element....

In the section on <u>Other Park and Open Space Possibilities</u>, there is an interesting discussion on Willow Hole, a portion of BLM land:

During the mid-1960's, the city acquired a 160 acre site from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Located approximately five miles to the southeast of the city, Willow Hole was thought to have good potential as a moto-cross recreation area. Originally, the project was to have been developed with Riverside County under a joint powers agreement, but the county subsequently decided against it.

Part of the agreement with BLM was that, if the city failed to make improvements on the land within five years, the land would revert to BLM (the deed contained a reverter clause). The city has been requested to sign a quit-claim deed since no improvements

have been made and the five year time period has expired. Former City Manager Dippner recommended that the guit-claim be signed.

Unfortunately, within the context of the Master Park Plan, it is not possible to provide definitive guidance as to what action the city should take in this matter. Considerable research would have to be performed to determine whether or not joint participation would be possible and to evaluate marketing potentials; environmental constraints; development, staffing, maintenance and insurance costs; and other important factors. Since there is some support to pursue this project, the city should determine if BLM will extend the time limit for the reversion of the land and authorize the preparation of a detailed feasibility study.

Public Facilities Element

The Public Facilities Element of the adopted General Plan "... provides a basis for anticipating expenditures, requirements, and for locating the facilities to achieve optimum utilization." The Element presents standards and required 1985 acreages for parks, schools, special facilities, civic buildings, and an airport.

Drainage Element

The Drainage Element of the adopted General Plan proposes solutions to the City's drainage problem "...including the problems of flash flooding and sheet flow...."

In the discussion of drainage and flood problems there is this statement:

Measures for the control of flood drainage on the regional basis are presently being planned by the Corps of Engineers. Of particular significance to the city is the study by the Corps of Engineers of the Mission and Little Morongo Creek Drainage Basin. Dams and retention basins upstream are necessary on these water courses before effective downstream action to channel the flow is possible....

Commentary

Seven of the required elements are presently included in the Desert Hot Springs General Plan; a housing element and a seismic safety element are yet to be adopted. Two of the adopted elements which are most in need of revision are the Land Use Element and the Noise Element. Additional work is needed to

bring the Zoning Ordinance into consistency with the General Plan.

Commitment to the General Plan is not significant. Although the growth rate in the Desert Hot Springs area is well above average, growth management is not an issue in the community. The general orientation is toward more growth.

There are no clear-cut concerns about planning for the CDCA.

City of Indian Wells

Introduction

The City of Indian Wells is located in the Coachella Valley on the northeast edge of the Santa Rosa Mountains. It is adjacent to the City of Palm Desert which lies to the west. The elevation ranges from 40-350 feet, and the yearly rainfall totals approximately three inches. The northeasterly boundary of the City lies along the Whitewater River Storm Channel.

The area of the City is approximately 12.5 square miles, and the area of the adopted Sphere of Influence is about 17 square miles. Within the southerly part of the City, portions of Sections 26, 28, and 4 and all of Section 2 are BLM lands.

A special census conducted by Riverside County revealed a population of 1,351 in the City of Indian Wells as of February 13, 1978. It is a city of upper class residential dwellings and contains no industrial land uses and minimal commercial land use.

Open Space and Conservation Elements

The only elements in the City of Indian Wells General Plan are the Open Space and Conservation Elements which were adopted by the City Council on May 2, 1974. The open space goal and policies are similar to those of the Riverside County Open Space Element. There are five categories proposed in the Element:

Natural Resource Preservation; Resource Production Management;

Outdoor Recreation; Public Health and Safety; and Urban. Natural Resource Preservation Areas are divided into two sub-categories: Flora and Fauna Habitat; and Scientific Study and Education. The text of the Element states that:

It is the intent of this Element that uses in the areas designated as "Natural Resource Preservation" be regulated and that any proposal to develop land in this category can be found to be compatible with this Element provided a development plan is prepared and approved by the City. The development plan shall

indicate the measures to be taken to assure that any adverse effect on the plant and wildlife can be satisfactorily mitigated....

Most of the hilly area in the southeast portion of the City is designated as Natural Resource Preservation.

The Resource Production Management Areas also consist of two sub-categories which are Groundwater Basin Recharge and Agriculture. As stated, "It is the intent of the Open Space Plan that there be no construction of flood control structures, except where necessary to protect existing development." The text has this to say about agriculture:

Agriculture Areas, in general, found within the City constitute a minimal portion of the agricultural economy of the Coachella Valley; however, those areas which contain date palms are of sufficient scenic importance so as to warrant special attention. It is the intent of this Plan to encourage the retention of all agriculture within the City for as long as it is economically feasible....

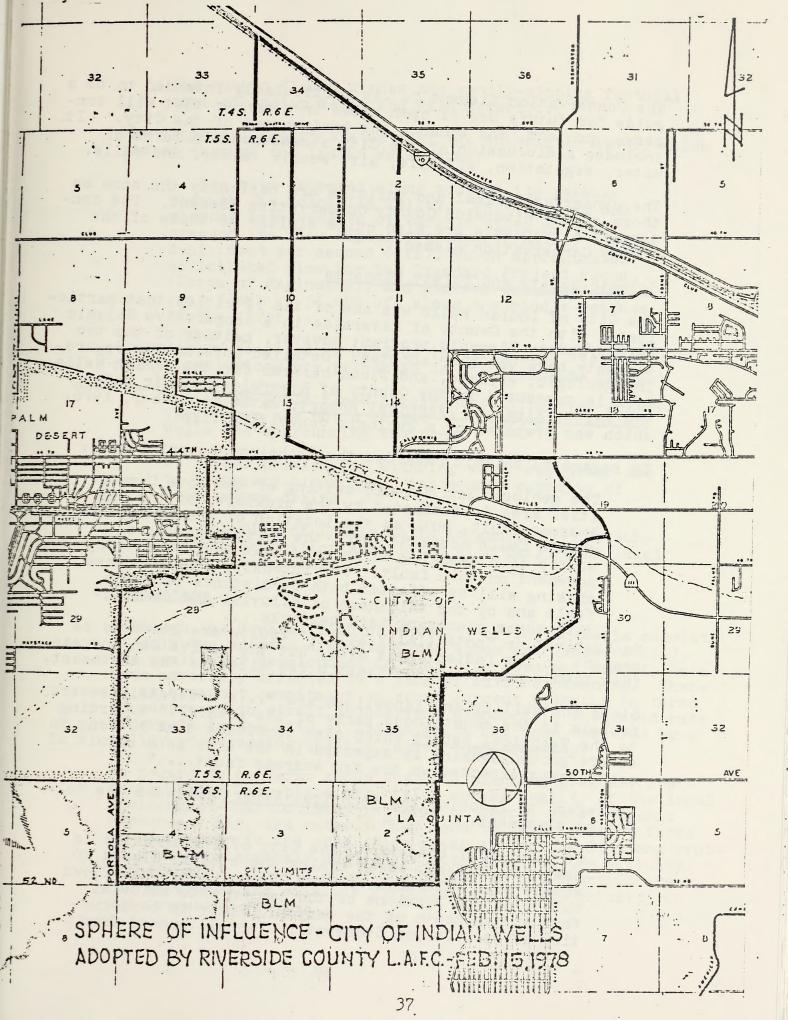
Outdoor Recreation Areas are proposed in three sub-categories:
Committed Open Space, Parks, and Scenic Corridors. Committed
Open Space includes such lands as golf courses, tennis courts,
and community pools. Parks are areas "...proposed to be maintained for their outstanding scenic, historic, archaeologic,
and cultural value..." Scenic Corridor areas:

...include lands in and adjacent to scenic routes and recreational linkages. It is proposed in this Plan that appropriate measures be taken which will maintain and enhance the aesthetic qualities of these routes....

Public Health and Safety Areas consist of four sub-categories: Flood Channels, Fault Zone, Erosion Plain, and Fire Hazard.

<u>Urban Areas</u> consist of two sub-categories: <u>Existing Urban</u> and <u>Designed Open Space</u>. The subdivided and intensively developed lands fall into the <u>Existing Urban</u> sub-category, and "...the readily developable remaining vacant acreages in the City..." would be designated as <u>Designed Open Space Areas</u>. The text then states that:

It is the intent of the Open Space Plan that any proposal for residential development, consisting of five (5) acres or more, in the areas designated as 'Designed Open Space' shall be permitted to develop as long as at least 50 percent of the gross acreage has been designated for open space use....



The Conservation Element "...is particularly intended to be a guide for future use of open areas in a manner that will conserve, protect, and enhance the environment of the City." It includes a discussion of the City's resources in terms of water, vegetation, wildlife, air, scenic values, and soils.

The conservation goal and policies are basically the same as those of the Riverside County Conservation Element. The conservation proposals are also quite similar to those of the County Conservation Element.

Seismic Safety and Safety Elements

The City of Indian Wells was one of the 12 cities that participated with the County of Riverside in a cooperative Seismic Safety/Safety Elements program; however, neither of the two elements have yet been adopted. Detailed information regarding geologic, seismic, and flood hazards for the Indian Wells area is presented in the County of Riverside Seismic Safety and Safety Elements Technical Report, dated September, 1976, which was prepared by a geologic consulting firm.

In regard to seismic hazards, the Technical Report states:

The geologic and seismic setting of the Cove Communities area is dominated by the proximity of the San Andreas fault, both as the location of ground rupture should fault movement reach the surface and as a source of a damaging earthquake that would accompany movement on this fault. The intensity of earthquake shaking will be affected both by distance from the fault and by the thickness of alluvial and sedimentary cover overlying hard bedrocks....

No "active" or "potentially active" faults are known to be present in the Indian Wells area, but the active San Andreas fault trends northwest-southeast a few miles to the northeast.

Slope instability and landslides are "...a moderately severe probelm in the mountainous parts of the area...." according to the <u>Technical Report</u> which also concludes that "Strong to severe ground shaking is expected in the area as a result of earthquakes expected on the San Andreas fault...."

In regard to flooding, the <u>Technical Report</u> includes the following statement:

Of particular concern to the City of Indian Wells is Deep Canyon Wash, which drains the steeply sloped 40 square mile watershed of Deep Canyon. The wash flows out of narrow portions of the canyon onto alluvial fans at the mouth of the canyon. Prior to construction of Deep Canyon Stormwater Channel, runoff from

the canyon flowed across the gently-sloping foothill area of Indian Wells and Palm Desert....

The <u>Technical Report</u> states that the Whitewater River, which passes through the Indian Wells area:

...has been improved along most of its passage through the Coachella Valley. Earth levees and channel improvements of various types have increased its flow capacity to approximately 75,000 cubic feet per second (cfs), which approximates anticipated flow for the Standard Project Flood (Corps of Engineers), and exceeds estimated 100-year flows of 55,000 cfs along the middle reaches of the river...

In relation to flooding hazards in the Indian Wells area, these conclusions are presented in the <u>Technical Report</u>:

- 1. Large-scale flood hazards resulting from a 100-year storm are not a threat to the City of Indian Wells and surrounding environs.
- 2. Local problems of standing water may occur due to temporary blockage or inadequate capacity of local storm drains.
- 3. The City of Indian Wells is generally not subject to inundation associated with failure of local dams or reservoirs.

Commentary

Although the General Plan of the City of Indian Wells consists of only two adopted elements (Open Space and Conservation), the quality of development in that City does not seem to have been adversely affected by a lack of advance planning. There is an apparent commitment to sound current planning in terms of adherence to strict development standards. The rapid rate of growth in the City of Indian Wells has been tempered by a policy of stressing quality rather than quantity.

In regard to concerns about the CDCA planning program, residents of the City place high value on the quality of the local environment--particularly in terms of peace, quiet, scenic resources, air, and water. They tend to favor passive forms of recreation in the open space areas around the City and probably would vigorously oppose ORV activities in the vicinity, for example. Protection of the hillsides and mountain areas for watershed and wildlife purposes have a high priority on the community agenda.

Introduction

The City of Indio is located in the Coachella Valley midway between the San Jacinto and Little San Bernardino Mountains. The area is flat and approximately at sea-level. The average yearly rainfall is about 3.0 inches.

The area of the City is 9.9 square miles, and the area of the City's Sphere of Influence is approximately 38.5 square miles. BLM lands are in Sections 2 and 6 within the northern portion of the Sphere of Influence.

The population of the City of Indio was estimated at 19,290 as of February, 1978. The economy of the City is based primarily upon agriculture, governmental services, industry, and commercial establishments serving the Coachella Valley.

Land Use Element

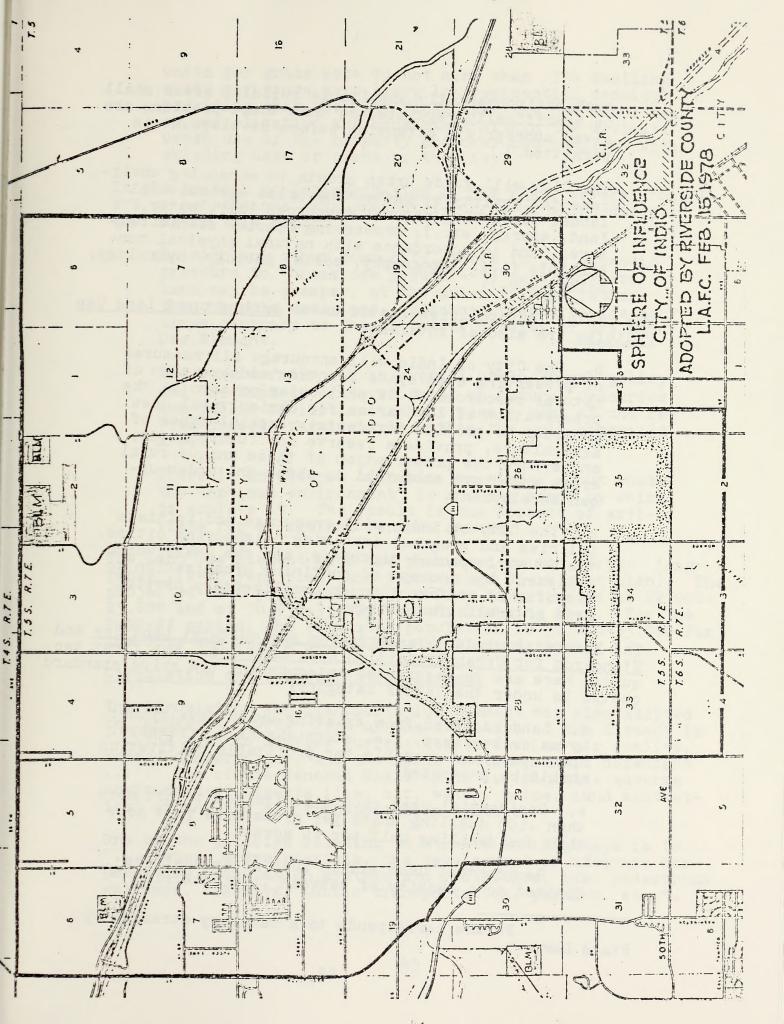
The Land Use Element was adopted on January 4, 1978 as part of the <u>Indio General Policies and Development Plan</u>. Its stated purpose is "...to serve as a statement of official policy as related to the uses of land within the City's Planning Area (Sphere of Influence officially adopted by LAFCO)...". As explained in the text, the Land Use Plan "...is not intended to show precisely the limits of land uses proposed nor individual uses on sites of less than approximately two acres..."

Under the heading of <u>General Goals for Urban Growth</u> there is this goal of importance to the CDCA:

·To minimize, through more sensitive and careful planning and regulation, the disruption due to natural disasters and minimize damage caused by improper development. By the same token, to insure an optimal pattern of open space throughout the urban area by furthering the concept of environmental resources management which will set aside the areas of natural hazard and value as open space.

Two policies of importance to the CDCA are found under the heading of <u>General Urban Growth Policies</u>:

•The City will discourage development where there is either a deficiency in public facilities, and take stringent measures to prevent development where there is a proven health hazard sufficient enough to endanger occupants if constructed. (Lands in unprotected flood plains, on or near fault lines, or other



such environmentally unsuitable building areas shall be specifically regulated so that these problems are given appropriate attention before development is permitted.)

•The City will guide urban growth in enhancing environmental quality by protecting prime agricultural lands, conserving natural resources (air, water, land, energy, etc.), preserving special scenic features, and in accordance with natural physical constraints (i.e. topography, soils, geology, hydrology, noise, etc.).

Two of the four policies listed under <u>Agricultural Land Use</u> <u>Policies</u> are also of interest:

- b. The City of Indio will encourage all measures of preserving open space for the "conservation of natural resources".* Of particular concern is the preservation of land areas for agricultural uses in order to provide for certain special types of agriculture, provide a reserve for future needs, and ensure the preservation of those unique rural areas which are essential to shape and order urban development.
- c. The City of Indio will encourage and initiate policies and programs involving neighboring cities, the County, special districts, and the State which implement the concept of confining urbanization to established centers through complimentary development of public facilities.

The Element includes <u>Standards for Agricultural Land Use</u> and <u>Standards for Urban-Transition Area Land Use</u>. The first two quoted here are in the former category and the third standard quoted is under the latter category:

- d. Land buffered from existing urban development by major barriers, i.e. storm channels, freeways, open space and suitable for profitable cultivation should be protected.
- e. Residential uses should be limited to not more than .100 dwelling units per gross acre (not more than one dwelling unit per 10 acres).
- c. Residential uses within such areas shall be limited to a density of between .1001 dwelling

Phrase corresponds to a category stressed by State Law.

units per gross acre to not more than .374 dwelling units per gross acre (very low residential density) providing that the City finds that the new densities or parcelization are consistent within the ultimate urban use of the property and does not conflict with existing uses or plans of the City.

In the section on <u>Implementation of the Plan</u>, several "barriers or constraints" are presented—three of which deserve quoting in this report.

- ·As with any other community, there is the economic pressure to "break new ground" -- to develop where land may be cheaper, at the urban fringes rather than recycle used land. Economic pressures are many times contrary to the proposed policies of the Land Use Element.
- •The consideration of an overall urban growth policy and the impacts of development on natural resources and public facilities has not been a part of the review process particularly within the unincorporated area.
- 'There is an absence of public knowledge about what the "optimum environment" is and the means by which to achieve it. The result is the absence of activists for or against various causes.

The Land Use Element maps are presented in two parts: long-range (10-20 year plan) and short-range (5-10 year plan). The projected 1980 population in the City is estimated at 22,000-25,000 and at 30,930-35,225 for the Planning Area. For the 1990-95 period, the estimated population is 30,000-35,000 for the City and 43,500-52,000 for the Planning Area.

Circulation and Transportation Element

The Circulation and Transportation Element was also adopted on January 4, 1978. Part of the objective of the Element is "...the need to address current issues such as air quality, energy conservation, and the needs of the transit dependent ...". One of the General Goals is to "...minimize adverse environmental impacts (i.e. air, water, noise, land aesthetics) of any and all transportation systems."

One of the policies relating to streets and highways is to "...ensure, where possible, the development of adequate complementary circulation systems and facilities, i.e. pedestrian walkways, bikeways, public transportation, parking, etc.".

Open Space and Conservation Element

On June 20, 1973, the City Council adopted the original Open Space and Conservation Element. The updating of the Land Use and Circulation Elements prompted city officials to prepare a new Open Space and Conservation Element which is expected to be adopted in late 1978. As proposed, it will "...reflect changes in City policy, community desires, and the latest information regarding available funding sources."

Two of the stated general goals in the Proposed Element of special interest to the Desert Study are:

'To encourage citizen participation in the planning, construction, and development of parks and open spaces. Included in this goal should be the public education and increased appreciation of the areas of many natural resources and open spaces and their relationship to them, i.e. effects of man on environment, design of facilities to ensure public safety, etc.

'To promote the conservation of the areas natural resources and amenities including but not limited to: agricultural land, energy, water, minerals, flora and fauna, and scenery.

Under the heading of Open Space in the Indio Planning Area, there is a discussion of open space resources in the Indio area which states in part that:

...the 1974 City Attitudinal Survey showed that many of Indio's residents were concerned about the increasing development of open space and agricultural land. Almost half of those interviewed felt the need to protect open space. Indio's greatest open space resources are the Indio Hills, agricultural lands, sand dunes areas, and the Coachella Valley Storm Channel...

Six of the nine <u>Policies Related to Open Space</u> are of special importance to the Desert Study:

- b. The City of Indio will consistently advocate the protection of the Indio Hills from growth infringements. The Bureau of Land Management controls most of this land, but no guarantee is present that will keep the land in public ownership and unscarred.
- c. The City of Indio will continue to encourage the development of a regional reserve for community use

of the Coachella Valley Storm Channel as part of a Valley-wide system of open area park land for riding, hiking, and other compatible uses, but maintaining the primary purpose of the Channel as a flood control facility. The City will attempt, in conjunction with the Coachella Valley Water District and adjacent property owners, to implement the goals and standards presented in the "Whitewater River Regional Public Reserve - Policy Statement". Refer to Appendix C for a copy of the Policy Statement.

- e. The City of Indio will actively encourage the preservation or conservation of agricultural land for its value as an open space resource as well as a resource needed to maintain a viable agricultural industry. Long-term agreements, such as Williamson Act contracts, will be actively pursued by the City of Indio.
- f. As the sand dune areas are one of the most outstanding but fragile features of the California deserts, the City of Indio will discourage their premature, indiscriminate development. The premature extension of public facilities, services, utilities, and other capital improvement for urban uses into these open spaces will be discouraged.
- g. The Southern California branch of the San Andreas Fault runs along the base of the Indio Hills. The City of Indio will discourage all development within the area of the Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone (an average of 1/8 mile on either side of earthquake fault trace) or all development shall conform to the standards as adopted in the City's Seismic Safety/Safety Element of the General Policies and Development Plan, 4/6/77.
- h. The City of Indio will prohibit development within areas known to be prone to any other natural hazards, i.e. flooding, fire, etc.

One of the Standards Related for Open Space is:

b. Open space areas should offer opportunities for recreation, appreciation and education of nature or culture, the protection of natural resources from infringing development, and/or the creation of buffers to protect the community against natural hazards or incompatible land uses.

Under Policies Related to the Conservation of Natural Resources in the Indio Planning Area, there are 17 policy statements

pertaining to scenic values, native vegetation, blowing sand, archaeological values, and the like. One of the policies that relates to the Desert Study is:

The wilderness is a plentiful, natural resource in the Coachella Valley. Without adequate protection, this fragile resource can suffer irreversible damage. The City of Indio will encourage the delineation of specific areas of interest and the development of means to reach these areas designed to make the wilderness accessible to all for visitation purposes. Wholesale off-road vehicle use will be discouraged except in specified areas.

Scenic Corridors Element

In compliance with State Law, the City Council adopted a Scenic Corridors (Scenic Highway) Element on April 6, 1977. The summary statement of the Element includes these words:

Indio joins the other Coachella Valley communities in enjoying the major scenic assets of the desert valley and surrounding mountains. The unique, natural qualities of sand dunes and desert flowers lie against the picturesque scenes of shadows and colors of mountains in all directions.

However, the scenic splendor of the desert environment is as fragile and easily affected as the desert itself. It can easily be destroyed by careless littering and bad development...

Three of the major goals of the Element are:

- ·To preserve the natural scenic qualities of the Coachella Valley.
- ·To help conserve and enhance the natural resources of the Coachella Valley and Riverside County for the use and enjoyment of both residents and visitors.
- ·To provide for the establishment and development of scenic corridors within the City and its sphere of influence for the purpose of: 1) enabling its citizens to increase their appreciation for the natural beauty of the area; 2) enhance the recreational opportunities served by the system of scenic corridors; and 3) ensure that such scenic beauty be protected against incompatible intrusions.

Under <u>Scenic Characteristics</u> there is this proposed standard for treatment of ecological areas:

There are two basic ecological zones which exist in the area--the desert environment and the mountain environment. There are also numerous sub-zones such as those existing around natural springs and oasis. Treatment along scenic corridors should, wherever possible, respect the integrity of these ecological zones. These zones, although subject to encroachment by man's development, should be preserved in their entirety wherever possible, or in large enough areas so as to maintain the indigenous quality which existed before man's encroachment.

Noise Element

The City Council adopted the Noise Element on April 6, 1977. As stated in the section on <u>Purpose and Scope of the Noise Element</u>, the Element "...includes pertinent definitions of noise and its measurement, objectives, goals and policies, future programs and standards...".

Field measurements of noise in the City indicated that "...the City of Indio, with the exception of the noise sensitive land uses along major arterials and railroads, does not have any major noise problems...." It should be noted, however, that considerable cross-country freeway, highway, and railroad traffic passes through the City.

In the section on <u>Relationship to Other General Plan Elements</u>, there is this statement relating to open space: "Provide for recreation pursuits free from any negative noise impacts that impair quality of the recreational area."

Seismic Safety/Safety Element

The City of Indio was also one of the 12 cities that participated with the County of Riverside in a cooperative Seismic Safety/Safety Element program, and on April 6, 1977, the City of Indio Seismic Safety/Safety Element was adopted. As stated in the summary of the Element, the objective of the Element is "...to reduce the chance for loss of life, property damage, and social and economic dislocation in the event of a major earthquake, flood, fire, or other disaster...".

The City of Indio, like the City of Coachella, is affected by the proximity of the San Andreas fault, which passes through the northeast portion of Indio's Sphere of Influence. Therefore, the City can expect very strong to severe ground shaking as a result of earthquakes. There is also a "...high to very high potential for liquefaction...because of shallow groundwater..." according to the Technical Report. Settlement is "...a more widespread potential hazard because of the extensive distribution of relatively young, poorly consolidated soils...".

As in the City of Coachella, large scale flood hazards resulting from a 100-year storm and inundation associated with failure of local dams or reservoirs are not a threat to the City of Indio.

Commentary

Except for a housing element which is being prepared, the City of Indio's General Plan includes all of the State-mandated general plan elements. The present practice of the City is to keep its General Plan policy statements up-to-date and consistent with one another as evidenced by the current revision of the Open Space and Conservation Element. Many of the various goals, policies, and standards in the Indio General Plan Elements lend support to the objectives of the California Desert Planning Program.

In regard to zoning consistency, city officials prefer to use the term "compatible" in relating the zoning ordinance to the General Plan. Work remains to be done to increase the degree of "compatibility". Community commitment to the General Plan is said to be moderate.

"No-growth" adherents cannot be counted in large numbers nor are there many "all-out" growth proponents. The annual rate of growth is significant, and citizens of the area appear to regard this as desirable.

As for concerns about the Desert Study, there is apparent support for hillside protection, recreation, scenic values, air quality, water quality, noise-dust controls, and energy conservation. There is some support for sand dunes preservation and some concerns about location of transmission corridors, energy plant siting, and location of solid waste sites--particularly for toxic wastes which may be a threat to water quality.

City of Palm Desert

Introduction

The City of Palm Desert is a resort-retirement-oriented type of community located at the foot of the Santa Rosa Mountains in Coachella Valley. It lies between the City of Rancho Mirage to the west and the City of Indian Wells to the east. The annual rainfall in the area is about 3 inches.

The area of the City is 11.7 square miles, and the City's adopted Sphere of Influence covers about 59 square miles. There are approximately 13 sections of BLM land within the Sphere of Influence.

As of February 13, 1978, the population of the City was estimated to be 10,780.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element was adopted on January 20, 1975, as part of the <u>Palm Desert General Plan</u> which was prepared by a consulting firm. As stated in the <u>Introduction</u> of the Element, it:

...represents a composite of other General Plan Elements in physical form. As a composite, the Land Use Element includes recommendations for the physical structuring of the community based on the population and land allocation data included in the Populations/Economics Element and the residential density proposals included in the Housing Element.

One of the goals listed under <u>Goals and Objectives</u> is "Develop a land use pattern that takes optimum advantage of the City's natural assets including views, mountain areas and the desert floor."

Under the heading of <u>Regional Context</u> there is this paragraph which implies support for the Desert Plan Program:

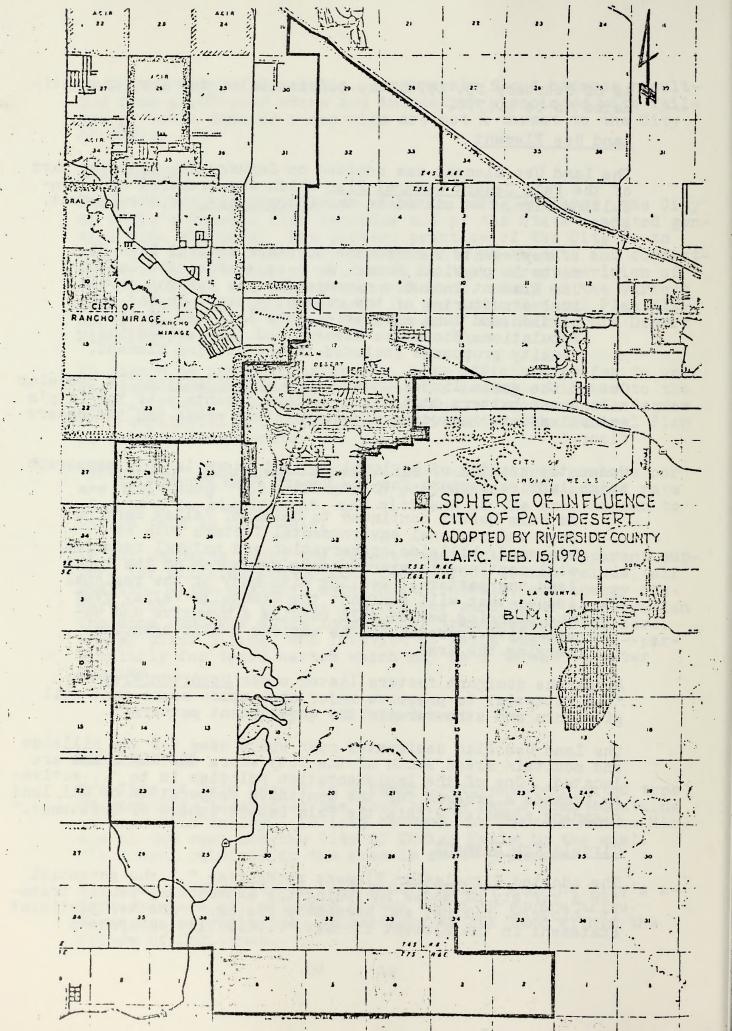
As Palm Desert continues to develop, Valley serving uses and regional environmental factors such as blowsand, hillside preservation and natural reserves will continue to exert strong pressures on the local land use pattern. Dealing with many of the regional issues that will confront the Coachella Valley over the planning period will require a creative and cooperative approach by the various public agencies serving the area.

Among the dominant factors listed under <u>Opportunities</u> is:
"The Potential to preserve major open space areas that will give form and structure to the development pattern."

The Land Use Plan designates open space uses for the hillside and mountain areas south of the City where the BLM lands are located. One of the implementation policies is to "...active-ly promote a program for the continued cooperation of all land planning agencies within the Palm Desert Sphere of Influence."

Circulation Element

The adopted Circulation Element recognizes "...the potential for a variety of modes including the automobile, public transit, bicycle, hiking, and horseback riding." Another pertinent statement in the Element is that "...circulation systems



influence the land use element of a general plan by suggesting the levels of access which make the development of certain types of uses feasible...."

One of the objectives listed under Goals and Objectives is:

Utilize transportation elements, particularly bicycle, hiking and equestrian trails, as a means of providing recreational and educational experiences by linking up the various park and public facilities in the planning area.

Under Opportunities, one of the statements is:

Circulation systems can respond to natural factors. Examples of this include the relationships of proposed circulation elements to drainage ways, prevailing wind conditions and preservation of rare natural areas.

Housing Element

One of the goals of the adopted Housing Element is to provide "...a range of housing for varying income ranges and life styles throughout the City." However, the achievement of that goal is difficult, since housing in Palm Desert is "...basically of an upper middle to high price range...", and many people cannot afford to live there. The Element concludes that "...housing for low income groups in Palm Desert is limited."

Conservation and Open Space Element

The <u>Introduction</u> of the Conservation and Open Space Element begins with this statement:

The need for open space within and adjacent to the urban environment is greater than just for its role in providing areas with traditional forms of recreation. Open space allows for the preservation of natural assets which cannot coexist with development. These include wildlife and their habitats, scenic vistas, unusual land form conditions, significant vegetation, as well as significant agriculture and mineral resources.

Under the heading The Natural Context for Open Spaces in Palm Desert, two major zones are defined:

1. The Valley floor consisting primarily of cresote scrub and sand dunes; this zone also includes the bajada, a nearly flat surface of joined erosional

deposits along the base of the San Jacinto Mountain range. The present urban area is located at the boundary between the desert floor and the bajada.

- 2. The San Jacinto Mountains which rise sharply just south of the City limits. The mountain environment consists of four basic life zones:
- (a) permanent and seasonal water, i.e., the bottoms of canyons which form this zone's drainage pattern,
- (b) the low desert which starts at the edge of the foothills and rises to about 1000 feet,
- (c) the high desert between 1000 feet and 3000 feet, and
- (d) pinyon scrub with some juniper from 3000 feet to 5141 feet (the top of Sheep Mountain which is the highest point in the planning area).

The Element contains statements about the archaeological sensitivity of the area, the need to be concerned about the Date Palm areas which are "...rapidly disappearing in the wake of urban expansion...", and the need to consider "...the aesthetically pleasing contrast between the Valley and the mountains...."

One of the <u>Implementation Policies</u> is:

Support the maintenance and development of the big horn sheep refuge managed by the University of California, Riverside, and the California Department of Fish and Game as an enclosure to better understand the environmental needs of this rare species.

Scenic Highways Element

The adopted Scenic Highways Element recognizes the need to control "...the visual quality of all areas within appropriate scenic corridors." Under <u>Opportunities</u> there are these statements:

- ·Because of the extent of undeveloped land the City can preserve the visual qualities of its scenic highway corridors through appropriate design guidelines and review processes.
- 'Palm Desert can establish and maintain appropriate liaison with the County, City of Palm Springs, and other cities in the Coachella Valley so that the

roads it wishes to develop as scenic highways can fit into areawide plans and potential funding programs.

Palm Desert is presently the only city in Riverside County which has an Officially Designated Scenic Highway within its boundaries (a segment of the Pines to Palms Highway 74).

Noise Element

A Transportation Noise Element is part of the adopted General Plan. One of the <u>Implementation Policies</u> is: "Develop and encourage the use of circulation systems which do not produce high noise levels, including bicycle and pedestrian systems."

Safety Element

The adopted Safety Element includes a Flood Plains and Drainage Map and a Wind Erosion Hazard and Severe Slopes Map. The former map indicates areas of occasional flooding and areas of occasional flooding if levees are breeched. The latter map indicates the large areas of the City which have severe slopes (9% to 30%) and areas with varying degrees of wind erosion hazards (slight, moderate, and severe). Severe wind hazard areas are located between Interstate 10 and the northerly boundary of the City of Palm Desert.

Seismic Element

One of the purposes stated in the <u>Introduction</u> of the adopted Seismic Element is:

To provide the City of Palm Desert with the necessary data and interpretation to take maximum advantage, in terms of development and safety, of the City's natural geologic setting.

Under the heading <u>Geologic and Seismic Setting</u> there is this statement regarding faults in the area:

Major faults located within the City limits of Palm Desert include several within the granitic and metamorphic rocks in the western and southern part of the City, and the South Pass fault group in the northern part of the City. These faults were probably active during the early formation of the San Jacinto Mountains, but there is no evidence to indicate that they are active today.

The main sources of earthquake shaking at Palm Desert are said to be the San Andreas fault on the northeast and the San Jacinto fault on the southwest. Settlement and

liquefaction as a result of seismic shaking are not regarded as significant hazards in Palm Desert.

Population/Economics Element

One of the sections in the Population/Economics Element is Population Trends and Projections for Palm Desert, within which there is this passage:

Palm Desert and the Sphere of Influence are expected to grow at an annual growth rate of approximately 5.4 percent. Between 1980 and 1995, Palm Desert will be approaching full development capacity. Population between 1980 and 1995, will increase 9,900, at an annual growth rate of 2.71 percent. By 1995, the population of 30,000 represents near capacity for the City of Palm Desert.

Under Opportunities, two of the statements are of value to CDCA planning in the area:

- Relatively undeveloped status makes it possible for the City to choose among varying options.
- •Recent environmental legislation gives cities more ability to direct growth and control its impact.

Public Facilities Element

The Public Facilities Element includes subsections on <u>Waste Management and Recreation</u>. One of the stated <u>Objectives</u> is: "Ensure that adequate community facilities are available before private development is approved so to ensure that facilities are not overloaded and areas are not left unserved."

One of the definitions under Recreation Element Policies is:

...the term "Regional Park" shall mean any large open space area which makes provision for recreational and leisure time activities for the general public in Riverside County as well as the residents of the City of Palm Desert.

Under Solid Waste Management one of the policies is "Coordinate the location for landfill operations with the County to exclude those areas which would be detrimental to either developed or open space areas."

Urban Design Element

In the <u>Introduction</u> of the Urban Design Element, urban design is defined in part as that form which:

- ·Preserves and enhances natural features such as vegetation, wildlife or topographic features;
- ·Preserves and enhances man-made features of historical or archaeological significance...

One of the <u>Objectives</u> is: "Develop a program that will maintain the visual quality of the hillsides and sand dunes surrounding or within Palm Desert through hillside development guidelines and ordinances."

Two of the Implementation Policies are:

- ·Develop parks for recreation and open space preservation which maintain the natural desert environment.
- ·Utilize the provisions of the zoning and design review ordinances to maintain the beauty of the mountain areas surrounding Palm Desert.

Implementation Element

The final element of the adopted Palm Desert General Plan is the <u>Implementation Element</u>. Its purpose is "...to provide a context for the necessary planning and programming that must take place to achieve the action policies...".

Under <u>Specific Area Plans</u>, a series of specific area plans are proposed:

- ·The area surrounding the College of the Desert.
- ·The northern blowsand/sand dune areas.
- ·The southern hill and mountain areas.
- ·Each of the City's neighborhoods.

The College of the Desert Area Specific Plan has since been prepared and was adopted on January 26, 1978. The proposed plans for the northern blowsand/sand dune areas and for the southern hill and mountain areas will be of great importance to the California Desert Plan.

Commentary

The City of Palm Desert General Plan shows evidence of a strong planning program. The Plan includes 13 elements, including the nine-mandated elements; all have been carefully prepared. The policies of the Plan offer much support to the goals of the California Desert Study--particularly those that relate to the interfacing of urban land uses with open space

uses and the natural environment. As in the City of Indian Wells, the rapid growth rate in Palm Desert in the past few years has been tempered by community concerns about the quality of development. There are no serious problems in regard to consistency of zoning with the Palm Desert General Plan, and community commitment to the Plan and planning in general is well above average. The current emphasis is upon growth management rather than growth control.

In regard to concerns about the Desert Planning Program, the people of Palm Desert seem to place high values on scenic resources, watershed protection, preservation of wildlife, air quality, and recreation. It is very likely that the California Desert Plan will be carefully and critically reviewed by officials and citizens of the City of Palm Desert.

City of Palm Springs

Introduction

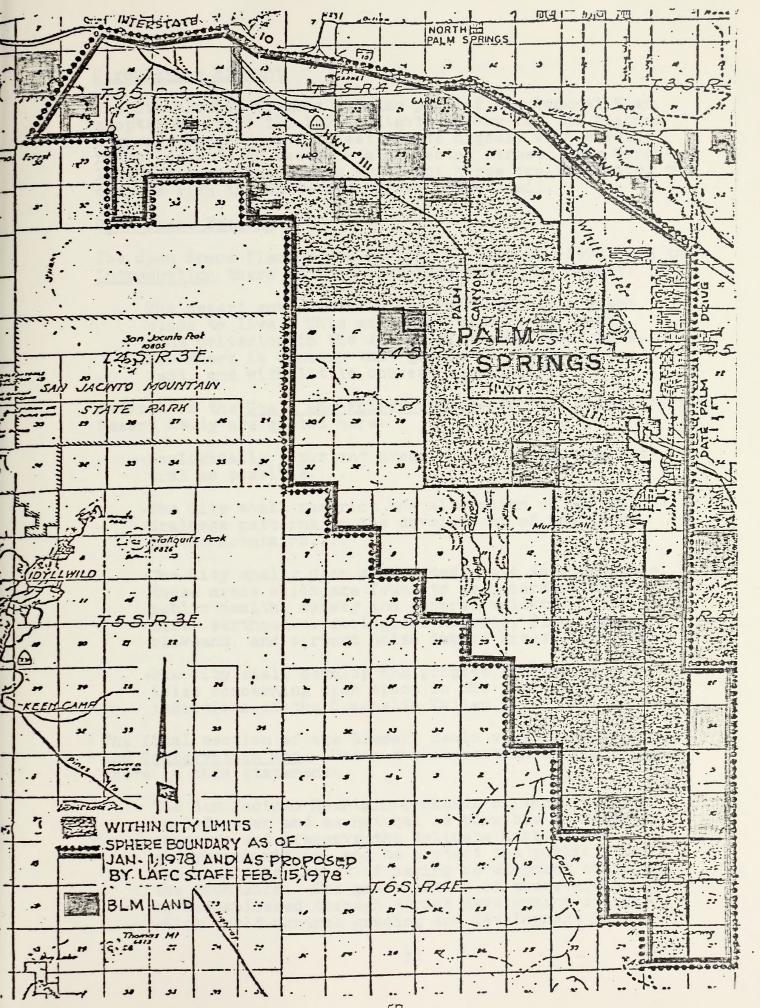
Located in the northern part of the Coachella Valley, the City of Palm Springs lies at the base of the steep, east-face of the San Jacinto Mountains. The City is underlaid with unconsolidated alluvium from the mountain canyons, and the Whitewater River trends along the northeast City boundary.

The area of the City is 77.8 square miles which makes it the largest city in Riverside County in terms of area. The adopted Sphere of Influence of the City of Palm Springs covers approximately 142 square miles. Almost one half of the area within the Sphere of Influence is either Indian Reservation or Public Domain land; about 17 square miles of this is BLM land.

The 1978 Riverside County Special Census revealed a population of 32,092 for the City of Palm Springs as of February 13, 1978. The City is a resort-retirement community consisting primarily of upper-middle to upper-class residences.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element is a part of the revised Palm Springs General Plan which was adopted by the City Council on April 24, 1974. The Element includes the Northwest Area Plan which covers the northwesterly area of the Sphere of Influence and the Palm Hills Area Plan which takes in the southerly portion of the Sphere. Most of the land outside the City is indicated for open space uses with residential densities ranging from one d.u. per 2.5 acres to one d.u. per 20 acres. Large areas are indicated as Watercourse within which no dwellings would be permitted, and some areas around the airport are designated as Airport Noise and Blowsand within which only 1 d.u. per five acres would be allowed.





Circulation Element

The Circulation Element is also part of the General Plan adopted on April 24, 1974. Rights-of-way for the planned highways range from 202 feet (State highway with service roads) down to 60 feet for a collector street. The Circulation Element includes a system of horse trails linking the canyons with the Whitewater River Levee Trail.

Open Space Element

The Open Space Element was adopted on June 27, 1973. In the <u>Introduction</u> there is this statement about the desert:

The desert environment makes Palm Springs a great place to live. This existing image is an important criterion in the design of the City's future. Now there is concern that growth is too much, too fast, and with little concern for quality....

Several of the <u>Goals and Policy Statements</u> that relate to the Desert Study are quoted here:

- •Ecologically important areas should be kept as natural as possible....
- •The City shall restrict the alteration of natural drainage patterns in the development of any lands in the mountains....
- •The City shall, upon study, designate as open space those areas which are found to be hazardous to the public health, safety and general welfare, i.e., fire, earthquake, geological hazards, flood plain, blowsand, and airport noise impact areas....
- •The City shall develop and propose open space policies concerning open space in the surrounding jurisdictions of the Coachella Valley....

The final section of the Element deals with the <u>Open Space</u> and <u>Conservation Map</u>. Under the subsection on <u>Hillsides</u> there is this statement:

The San Jacinto Mountain backdrop of the City is to be left open and as natural as possible in order to conserve and preserve the delicate habitat and ecosystems within, and to protect the public from the hazardous impact of having development occur in the mountains. The preservation of these areas may be accomplished through strict development standards which would control grading and development in

ecological sanctuaries, allow one (1) unit per twenty (20) acres, and forbid development on slopes in excess of thirty percent (30%)....

Under the subsection on Flood Plain there is this statement:

The map shows extensive areas in the washes and their surrounding flood plains...Essentially, all of these areas are undeveloped and can be considered as existing open space. Much of this area will inevitably develop as the hazard or detrimental ecological effects of development are nullified. The plan indicates permanent public use of the washes and in some cases portions of the flood plain. These washes, including the Tahquitz, Baristo, Palm Canyon, Tachevah and Whitewater, provide numerous possibilities for recreational uses. The intent is to place recreational movement systems within these washes and establish related open space recreation uses along side them...

The following statement is in the subsection on Blow Sand.

In a study conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service it was found that blowing sand damages land, residential and commercial buildings, motor vehicles, trailers, traffic signs and utility poles by abrasion. It fills drainageways and plugs culverts and bridges. It accumulates in roads, driveways, yards, carports and patio areas. Individuals, organizations and local County and State Governments spend large amounts of money each year for sand removal. Property values have decreased. Proposed treatment of this hazard revolves around the encouragement of well protected development and the discouragement of development such as the Panorama and Dream Homes....

Conservation Element

The Conservation Element was also adopted on June 27, 1973, and is closely related to the Open Space Element. Among the Goals and Policies are these which are pertinent to the CDCA:

- ·The City shall discourage sprawl development....
- ·The City shall, through acquisition and regulation, preserve lands which are desired as natural desert....
- •The City shall encourage the reservation of flood plain areas and provision of development standards which will ensure the percolation of water runoff

for the replenishment of the natural water table

- •The City shall maintain strict regulation of development on watercourse, blowsand and hillside areas
- •The City shall provide for the reservation of ecologically important areas such as watercourse areas where surrounding wildlife and plant life are dependent on water.
- •The City shall through regulation prevent development from having adverse effects on surrounding ecological habitat....
- •The City shall discourage the mining for mineral resources in areas which will be in conflict with projected land uses and natural ecosystems.
- •The City shall maintain strict development standards for the development of mining industries.

Under <u>Specific Characteristics and Policies</u>, subsection <u>Fire Hazard</u>, there is this statement:

The extreme desert environment restricts the accumulation of natural plant materials, but there are areas where fire hazards do exist. Vegetation generally occurs sparsely on the valley floor and mountains due to harsh climatelogical <code>/sic/</code> extremes and lack of water. In the canyons and coves where there exists a water source, as in the Tahquitz Canyon, numerous indigenous plant materials flourish. In these areas, at times throughout the year, there exist extreme fire hazards. Development should be restricted in these areas and, where necessary, recreational uses should be kept to a minimum....

Under Historical and Archaeological Sites, it is stated that:

Historical and archaeological sites in Palm Springs and the surrounding area are important assets to be conserved and preserved....

There are numerous Indian archaeological sites scattered throughout the area which must be discovered and/or designated as such....

One of the policies listed under the subsection Animal and Plant Life is: "The City shall seek the development of wild-life preserves in areas where a multiplicity of conservation determinants exist."

The Element includes an explanation of the Open Space and Conservation Plan Map by stating, in part:

The Map indicates both conservation and open space areas. The Conservation Element is separate from, but allied to, the Open Space Element. Areas designated as conservation areas will to some degree restrict development and will place the burden of proving the compatibility of the development with the natural resources upon the developer....

Scenic Corridors Element

In compliance with the State law requiring a scenic highways element, on October 2, 1974, the City Council adopted a Scenic Corridors Element. The <u>Introduction</u> contains this statement about the local scenic resources:

The scenic splendor of the desert environment is ever apparent, whether it be the views of the massive mountains in the west or along the arterials that traverse the desert floor, blending into the hillsides in the east. Views along and from the roadway can be easily destroyed by careless littering, and by poor street design, development controls, and sign and billboard controls. These deterrents to scenic preservation affect both manmade and natural amenities. The desert's scenic environment with its delicate and sparse vegetation and fragile geologic features is especially prone to permanent scars if man's roads and developments are not well planned and ecologically sound.

Under the subheading Scenic Corridor Planning Process the Element states that:

The major scenic assets which have been identified through these processes are the mountain ranges that surround the City, including the San Jacinto Mountains on the west (San Jacinto Peak in particular), the Santa Rosa Mountains to the south, and the Little San Bernardino Mountains and San Gorgonio Peak on the north. Another scenic asset is the desert valley in which the City is located, with its unique natural qualities such as sand dunes, desert flowers, etc. covering the vast valley floor.

Listed under <u>Goals and Policies</u> are several statements which are pertinent to the California Desert Study; two of which are:

·The City shall seek to preserve and maintain those

areas or sites which are found to have exceptional scenic value....

The City shall utilize its scenic corridors wherever possible for scenic and recreation links (equestrian and bike trails) between scenic, open space, and recreation areas....

In the explanation of the <u>Scenic Corridor Map</u>, an interesting point is made about the need to conserve energy in relation to trips through scenic areas:

After detailed analysis, it has become apparent that the establishment of "signed" official state or local scenic routes within the City would be in direct conflict with the existing City policy of reducing automobile traffic. The City actively encourages visitors and residents to get out of their automobiles and utilize the public transportation facilities, bicycles, and sidewalks. The logic behind this policy is self-evident due to the national energy crisis, increasing air pollution, and the City's increasing problem of noise pollution and traffic congestion within commercial and residential areas.

Noise Element

The Noise Element was adopted on October 2, 1974. One of the <u>Technical Conclusions</u> is "Residential areas isolated from major roadways and the airport have been found to be very quiet."

In the section on <u>Impact Mitigation</u> and under the subsection <u>Open Space</u>, there is this statement:

The nature of noise sources in Palm Springs is not sufficiently restrictive to require designation of meaningful areas for open space exclusively. Noise problem areas do exist however, and some consideration of such noise areas as open space may be justified.

Caution will need to be exercised to insure that quiet pursuits in areas selected for open space, are not disturbed by external noise. Conversely, open space may be used as a distance buffer of objectional noise source....

One of the Noise Element Policies is:

·Consider the development of "quiet zones" in special areas of the City, perhaps in existing or

proposed recreation areas. All forms of noise would be controlled so that people could visit and enjoy solitude as part of their recreation and leisure experience.

Seismic Safety-Safety Element

On October 2, 1974, the Seismic Safety-Safety Element was adopted. Among the <u>Technical Conclusions</u> were these findings in regard to fire, wind, and flooding:

- 1. The most fire-prone areas in the Palm Springs study area are the San Jacinto Mountains south of the City.
- 2. Other principal fire hazard areas include hilly lands lying south of Chino Canyon. Included in this region would be the Tahquitz Canyon area which has burned recently.
- 3. Significant portions of the Palm Springs study area are subject to very severe wind erosion.
- 4. The City of Palm Springs is subject to flash flooding as a natural component of the desert environment....

Some of the findings in regard to seismic safety were:

- 1. The City of Palm Springs is located near a seismically active area....
- 4. The primary geologic hazard at Palm Springs is severe ground shaking as the result of major earthquakes on the Mission Creek branch of the San Andreas fault or the San Jacinto fault....
- 7. Settlement and liquefaction as a result of seismic shaking are not considered significant hazards in Palm Springs, provided soils engineering investigations are conducted by competent professionals on sites considered for structures.
- 8. Soft sedimentary rocks, prone to landsliding in many other parts of California, are not present in Palm Springs, and this hazard is limited primarily to the rockfall types of landslide.

In the section on <u>Relationships</u> under the subsection <u>Open</u> <u>Space</u>, there is this statement:

The nature of seismic and secondary hazards in Palm

Springs is not sufficiently narrow or restrictive as to meaningfully designate areas to be considered for open space. Significant flood, fire and wind erosion areas do exist, however, and some consideration of such hazard areas as open space may be justified.

Two of the Public Safety Policies are:

- 2. Review and evaluate proposed land uses in areas of high fire hazard as to their vulnerability to fire and their potential as ignition sources....
- 12. Review and evaluate proposed land uses in areas of flood hazard....

Master Plan of Bikeways:

A Master Plan of Bikeways was adopted on July 16, 1975, as an amendment to the Parks and Recreation Element. In <u>The Need</u> for a <u>Master Plan of Bikeways</u>, it is pointed out that:

...bikeways have been encouraged as implementive tools for alleviating street congestion, linking recreation and commercial centers, and exposing the resident and tourist to the community and its environment in a more intimate and healthful way than most other modes of transportation.

One of the <u>Goals and Policies</u> is: "Maintain coordination among the various commissions and committees within the City and the local, regional, state, and federal agencies whose actions could affect the bicycle planning program in Palm Springs."

Commentary

As one of the oldest incorporated cities in the Coachella Valley, the City of Palm Springs has had a long history of effective city planning. Community awareness of the value of sound comprehensive planning has encouraged the planning department to frequently update and maintain the Palm Springs General Plan. Perhaps because there have been so many revisions and additions to the Plan, not all of the planning documents are readily available to the public, however. For the most part, the zoning in Palm Springs is consistent with the General Plan, and there is strong commitment to the Plan by citizens and officials.

Although quality of development has generally always been the watchword in Palm Springs, growth has been tolerated and perhaps even encouraged. Currently, there is a moratorium on

new residential construction--not because of strong feelings about the need for growth control per se--but because the sewage treatment capacities have been reached.

Concerns about the California Desert Study in the community center about scenic values, energy conservation, watershed protection, brush fire prevention, wildlife habitat, blowsand problems, water quality, air quality, and off-the-road vehicle problems. There is particular concern about the possible harmful effects of mineral extraction activities in the area. On balance, the people of Palm Springs have a protective attitude about the quality of the surrounding desert environment but not to the extent that they seek significant limitations on urban growth.

City of Rancho Mirage

Introduction

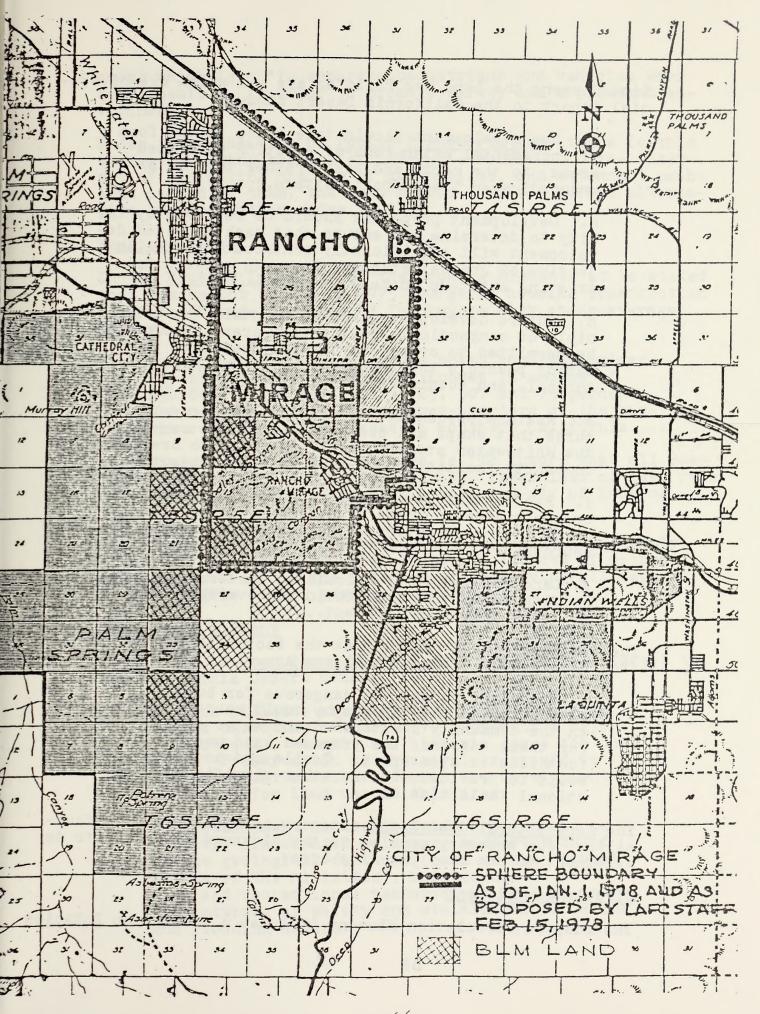
The City of Rancho Mirage is located east of the City of Palm Springs in the Coachella Valley. The City of Palm Desert lies to the southeast. The northeasterly part of the City of Rancho Mirage is on the valley floor, and the southwestern portion rises to an elevation of 2,220 feet in the Santa Rosa Mountains.

The area of the City is 15 square miles, and the area of the adopted Sphere of Influence is about 30 square miles. There are two sections of BLM land in the southwesterly part of the City and almost 6 sections of Indian land in the northerly portion of the City's Sphere of Influence.

The population of the City was estimated to be 6,356 as of February 13, 1978. Like the neighboring Cities of Palm Desert and Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage is a retirement-resort community. As stated in the <u>Population</u> subsection of the General Plan text, the residents "...include persons who are retired or semi-retired, highly active, and continue to receive incomes from investments and/or retirement pensions..."

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element was adopted on October 2, 1975, as part of the General Plan for the City of Rancho Mirage. The Plan, which was prepared by a consulting firm, combines the various elements into two main groupings: The Physical Development Element (land use, circulation, noise, housing, and energy elements); and the Environmental Resources Element (conservation, open space, seismic safety, scenic highway, and public safety elements).



Listed among the Land Use Policies are six which are of special import to the California Desert Study:

- b. New development should take place in the form of incremental extensions of existing developed areas, to the north and east, rather than in an uncoordinated "leap frog" pattern.
- c. Development proposals should be reviewed by the city to determine and ensure that each proposed development will significantly contribute to the objective of gradual staging of growth outward from existing built-up areas.
- d. Future developments should maintain the principle of compaction. Residential areas should not be permitted to overwhelm natural features, thus making possible the preservation of natural, historical, and scenic features.
- e. Maximum use should be made of the natural features that shape and define communities, such as the Whitewater storm channel, in order to create community facilities and improve scenic beauty.
- f. Residential development should be prohibited or restricted in areas of hazard to public safety or to the preservation of unique environmental resources.
- g. Land use should be calculated in terms of true holding capacities and should not overwhelm the delicate desert environment....

The Land Use Plan proposes that the foothills be restricted from development, since the slopes are:

...steep and rocky, too dangerous for building. Alteration of the topography could cause erosion in the community's watershed and water supply area. For these reasons, the proposed land use for the foothills is open space. Trails and access points would be provided, but no other significant recreational facilities...

The <u>Agricultural Open Space</u> category is applied to the foothills. The category applied to the blowsand areas limits development to one d.u. per five acres.

Circulation Element

The adopted Circulation Element includes a section on Policies

among which is: "To separate pedestrians and vehicles wherever possible, in order to promote safety and a pleasant environment...".

Under the subheading of <u>Public Transportation</u>, there is this statement urging the use of alternate modes: "In the interest of minimizing the use of automobiles, and attendant problems caused by them, the city should actively pursue alternative transportation modes....".

Housing Element

In the <u>Housing Inventory</u> of the Housing Element, it is stated that the recent (prior to 1975) surge of housing construction in Rancho Mirage is intended for buyers with above-average income:

The market for most of these units consists primarily of persons with annual incomes in excess of \$50,000. Down payments of 25, 50, and 75 percent are not uncommon. About three-quarters of the buyers come from urban areas in Southern California...

Nevertheless, one of the <u>Policies</u> is "To insure that all residents have access to quality housing, regardless of age, race or ethnic background by keeping a balanced mix of housing types."

One of the guidelines presented in the Element is: "Apply rigorous, yet flexible, controls to all aspects of proposed new construction, in the interest of preserving all aspects of the fragile desert environment...".

Open Space Element

Six of the 12 Open Space Policies are of special interest to the California Desert Study:

- 2. The hillside areas of the city (those with slopes exceeding 10 percent), represent a major recreational, visual, and historic asset for the city. Preservation of these values should be the paramount consideration in the development of policy for land use in this area.
- 3. Development in the hillside area should be strictly discouraged to ensure preservation of unique geological features (such as the natural patina of the hillsides), maintenance of the view and recreational resource, as well as in the interest of safety and minimization of slide and flooding hazard.

- 4. Development of recreational facilities in the hillside area should be consistent with the objective of maintaining this area as an animal preservation area of regional significance. Cooperative efforts should be taken, with the Burea of Land Management, to facilitate establishment of a Bighorn Sheep Preserve in appropriate sections of the area. The circulation system should permit access for residents of the region, yet maintain separation between vehicular equestrian and foot traffic in the area itself.
- 5. Appropriate security measures should be taken to control access to the hillside area, in the interest of preserving the fragile character of the area.
- 6. Special attention should be given to the preservation of open areas which are of particular scenic, historic, or agricultural value (e.g., date and citrus groves)....

Conservation Element

Under the subheading of <u>Wildlife and Vegetative Resources</u>, there is the following statement:

Wildlife has an intrinsic value as a part of the ecosystem in which we live. The contrast which the wildlife and vegetative resources provide is one of the most important assets to a city such as Rancho Mirage. Besides their value for pleasure, vegetative resources have many purposes for both man and for the natural ecosystem including uses for recreation, watershed protection, erosion, and climate modification.

Under <u>Wildlife</u> and <u>Vegetative Resources Policies</u> there are two policies of interest to the Desert Study:

- 2. The habitats of "endangered" species within the city should be given special consideration. Federal and state agencies should be encouraged to acquire and manage endangered species habitats.
- 3. The city's vegetative resources should be carefully conserved because of their importance for wildlife habitat, for watershed, for climate modification, for erosion control, and for their many other aesthetic values....

Under <u>Archaeological Resources</u> there is this statement:

Known archaeologic sites have been found within the mountainous area of the city. These sites tend to fall into two categories: (1) at the point where the streams from the mountains break out on the edge of the valley floor (alluvial fan), and (2) areas adjacent to streams or sloughs.

Besides the known sites there are undoubtedly many undiscovered archaeologic sites within the city. Planning for projects should include investigation for potential archaeologic remains.

Scenic Highways Element

The brief Scenic Highways Element presents 12 specific program policies, one of which is: "The development of programs which will permanently maintain, periodically update, and effectively enforce scenic conservation measures...".

State Highway 111 and Bob Hope Drive are the proposed scenic highways.

Noise Element

The recommended Policy of the Noise Element is to "...adopt a policy statement for the reduction of noise in the community as part of a broad approach to environmental quality control".

Seismic Safety Element

The brief Seismic Safety Element under Impact of the General Plan states that "Ground shaking and associated damage can be expected to occur as a result of an earthquake associated with the San Andreas fault...".

Safety Element

One of the hazards addressed in the brief Safety Element is <u>Wind</u>. Part of the statement under that heading is quoted here:

Wind erosion and wind damage are often severe in this area of the desert. The blowsand, which seasonally crosses the city from northwest to east/southeast is particularly troublesome. Existing developments in this particular area incur high repair and maintenance costs each year due to sand damage....

Energy Element

The brief Energy Element includes a section on <u>Mitigation</u> <u>Measures</u>, one of which is: "Encourage and support research

into alternative, nonpolluting forms of energy; for example, solar and geothermal energy...".

Commentary

Although the General Plan for the City of Rancho Mirage was completed only three years ago, a major revision of the Plan by a new consulting firm is presently underway. The existing General Plan contains considerable information but it is organized in a confusing manner and is difficult to interpret. Because the General Plan is regarded as obsolete, there is little community commitment to the Plan. There is some citizen interest in comprehensive planning, and officials hope that increased public involvement in the General Plan revision process will lessen public apathy.

There is apparent concern about the problems related to growth management and control measures. As in the neighboring cities of Palm Springs and Palm Desert, concerns about the California Desert Study reflect the prevailing protective attitude toward the desert environment.

II. THAT PORTION OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY WITHIN THE CALIFORNIA DESERT CONSERVATION AREA

Introduction

Almost 93 percent (about 18,500 square miles) of the total land area of San Bernardino County lies within the California Desert Conservation Area. There are four incorporated cities within this portion of the County: Adelanto, Barstow, Needles, and Victorville. This section of the report presents a broad overview of the local plans of the aforementioned cities and San Bernardino County as they relate to the CDCA planning program.

San Bernardino County

Land Use Element

The Countywide Land Use Element is an important part of the San Bernardino County General Plan which was adopted on June 6, 1966. The General Plan, in turn, is composed of three parts: The Valley Plan, the Conservation Plan, and the Desert Plan. The Desert Plan included almost the same major part of the County that is within the CDCA--more than 90% of the County's total area of 20,131 square miles.

Like most of the eight counties within the CDCA, San Bernardino County is presently involved in carrying out major revisions of its General Plan, including the Land Use Element. A <u>Preliminary Draft General Plan</u> has been prepared by the Planning Department and will soon undergo public hearings. As stated in the <u>Introduction</u> of the Preliminary Plan, it reflects "...a consolidation of land use and physical development policy from forty existing plans...". This review will refer to both General Plans: The 1966 Plan and the 1978 Preliminary Plan.

In the Desert Portion of the 1966 Plan, four objectives for <u>Urbanizing Areas</u> are listed -- two of which are quoted here:

- 1. To encourage existing cities, towns and public service districts to grow by contiguous additions or logical extensions and to cooperate in their development in order to establish and maintain public services on the most efficient basis....
- 3. To adopt regulations, ordinances and policies necessary to implement...specific plans; to achieve orderly growth and development and to prevent

avoidable disturbance or destruction of the desert's natural beauty....

Including the above-mentioned <u>Urbanizing Areas</u>, there are nine categories of future land use in the 1966 Desert Plan: <u>Rural Retreat Areas</u>, <u>Urban Centers</u>, <u>Special Service Centers</u>, <u>Defense Reservations</u> (Military Lands), <u>Recreation-Conservation Areas</u>, <u>Agricultural Areas</u>, <u>Resource Reserve Areas</u>, and <u>Regional Parks</u>.

The Rural Retreat designation is especially intended for the private lands interspersed among public domain lands (primarily $2\frac{1}{2}$ and 5 acre parcels resulting from the Small Tract Act). The text points out that "...there are approximately 120,000 unimproved small parcels in existence today--more than enough to accommodate the anticipated population increase there for the next fifty years..." One of the Objectives of this category is:

Large acreage blocks of public domain lands remaining in these areas should not be further subdivided or classified as Government Small Tracts. Disposal of such lands should be based only on definite proposal for development.

<u>Urban Centers</u> are for those areas "...where activities such as major trading centers, administrative functions and public service centers are found...", while <u>Special Service Centers</u> are for an area which "...may be a convenience center for recreation activities along the Colorado River, or it may be a self-contained community within a military base, providing special services to the resident population...".

Three of the six <u>Objectives</u> listed under the description of the <u>Agriculture</u> category are quoted here for their importance to the CDCA Study:

- 1. Reserve prime agricultural soil lands for agricultural purposes; both for interim and ultimate use....
- 5. Deliberately encourage and protect agriculture for the continuation of an important economic asset to the desert area.
- 6. Discourage leap-frogging of subdivisions into productive agricultural areas.

Recreation-Conservation Areas "...are especially large blocks of land, primarily in public ownership, where the scenic wild-life and recreation values...are superior...". Areas such as Cima Dome and most of the Turtle Mountains are given this designation on the Plan Map. The following Objectives are stated

for this category:

- 1. To encourage the development and multiple use of such areas for recreation and other compatible uses.
- 2. To encourage and assist all cognizant public jurisdictions and levels of government to identify and reserve these lands for such uses.
- 3. To promote and encourage the public recognition and use of these areas as a valuable economic base activity for the County.
- 4. To take all necessary steps to preserve and enhance the natural beauty and historic values found in these areas.

The category of <u>Resource Reserve Areas</u> are for those desert areas "...not otherwise designated for specific uses or reservation...". Most of these lands are in public ownership and the three <u>Objectives</u> are:

- 1. To cooperate with Federal agencies in the management and planning of these areas.
- 2. To encourage multiple use of such areas in resource development.
- 3. To encourage the retention of such lands in public ownership.

Under the caption of <u>Desert Issues</u>, the 1978 Preliminary Plan presents a list of issues affecting the Desert: <u>Transportation</u>, <u>Energy</u>, <u>Recreation</u>, and <u>Natural Resource Extraction</u>. In regard to <u>Recreation</u>, the text states that "...the Desert in the past 25 years has become a well-used recreation area for the residents of Southern California..." and goes on to say:

Recreation activities are many and diverse and include: camping, sightseeing, offroad vehicle uses, rockhounding, and chariot sailing, observation of desert flowers, photography, mountain climbing and hiking. Offroad vehicles, however, have brought to the forefront the issue of recreational use versus the preservation of the desert environment....

Additional impacts result from the thousands of weekend visitors who roam the desert in an assortment of campers, motorcycles and dune buggies. Abuses include trespassing private property, the vandalism of archaeological sites and the disruption of desert surface soils and ground cover. Such abuses typically result from an unorganized, uneducated public's use of desert lands and BIM's inability to police the entire desert area.

The discussion of <u>Natural Resource Extraction</u> includes these statements:

Within the County there are an estimated 15,000 mining claims... Mining can seriously affect the desert's air, water and visual quality, public safety and be affected by encroaching incompatible land uses.

As further pointed out in the text:

A serious impact to mining is the development of a potentially valuable mineral site by incompatible land uses...desert mineral deposits, especially rare earths, are a rarity and should be protected from non-mining development.

An interesting feature of the 1978 Plan is the inclusion of four "alternative development scenarios" which are based on population, housing, employment, and land use projections. These 20 year development alternatives range from a dispersed pattern to a concentrated one. The staff-recommended projection is Alternative 1 (Sum of Local Government Forecasts/E-150) which provides for a 27 percent increase in population in the Desert by the year 2000 (36,427 people). The Desert would receive a 30 percent increase in housing by the year 2000.

The 1978 Preliminary Plan also presents a series of Countywide Goals and Policies; two of those which pertain to land use planning are quoted here:

- A-1.1 Direct development to areas where effects and costs of air, water and related pollution can be minimized and to areas where related services and facilities already exist with extra capacity....
- A-1.3 All new or substantially renovated development and infra-structure should avoid natural hazards areas and cause least possible damage to physical land characteristics, especially soils, slopes, drainage, vegetation, fauna and natural beauty....
- A-1.5 Cooperate with all relevant levels of government in and beyond the County to prepare, adopt and carry out joint or coordinated studies, land use plans, policies and actions and vigorously enforce regulations for mutual improvement and orderly use of man-made and natural environments in the County

and Southern California region

Circulation Element

A <u>Master Plan of Highways</u> was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1956. The 1966 General Plan updated the Master Plan and referred to it as the <u>Circulation Element</u>. As stated in the text:

The Circulation Element of the General Plan for the desert portion of San Bernardino County is intended to account for all rights-of-way, easements, and sites utilized to transport people and goods within and beyond the County boundaries. These consist of freeways, highways and roads, railroads, and airports.

The 1978 Plan, under the caption of <u>Desert Issues</u>, presents a list of deficiencies in the Desert's road system including inadequate road maintenance, lack of inter-governmental coordination on the location of transportation facilities on public lands, and access problems. For example, one of the statements points to the need for more "detailed planning":

Existing transportation planning by the State, County and Bureau of Land Management has been done without the benefit of detailed resource inventories and planning. Without this detailed planning there is no assurance that a facility constructed today provides adequate protection to Desert resources or that it will adequately serve future Desert residents. The roads generally take the shortest and easiest route between two points. While this is necessary on major routes, it is neither desirable or necessary on the bulk of the system....

Housing Element

The Countywide <u>Housing Element</u> was adopted on August 18, 1969. The inventory of housing conditions on a regional basis pointed out that problems of substandard housing and availability of housing for low income families were evident in the County.

The 1978 Preliminary Plan, under <u>Countywide Environmental Setting and Trends</u>, indicates that poor housing conditions and an inadequate supply continue to be a Countywide problem.

Conservation and Open Space Elements

The Conservation and Open Space Elements were adopted on June 26, 1973. Work on the Elements was coordinated through the planning directors of each incorporated city in the County so that the Elements could be adopted by each city if desired.

The Conservation Element considers the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources including soils and geologic features; water; air; and energy sources. Together, these form the resource base for plant life, animal life, and human life. The Open Space Element considers the same factors and organizes them into four categories of open space lands: Preservation of Natural Resources; Managed Production of Resources; Outdoor Recreation; and Public Health and Safety. The Open Space Element maps include an additional category of Interim Open Space Area (now predominantly "open" in character, but subject to some urban expansion within 20 years).

The chapter on <u>Goals</u> which presents 12 goals, most of which are applicable to the California Desert Study:

- 1. To protect, conserve, and avoid unnecessary disruption of soils, slopes, riverbeds, sand dunes, fault zones and other natural geologic features.
- 2. To halt further pollution and depletion of water resources, and to provide for an adequate future supply of high quality.
- 3. To halt further degradation of air resources and to improve air quality to a standard consistent with healthy human, animal and plant life.
- 4. Conserve energy resources and develop less environmentally harmful methods for their production and utilization.
- 5. Preserve beneficial natural and "introduced" plant life and protect animal species with limited or specialized habitat requirements.
- 6. To preserve primitive open spaces in their natural condition and control use to those activities which avoid destruction of the essential qualities of such areas.
- 7. To create a system of open spaces within urban areas and guide urban uses into well-defined areas which enhance community identity and preserve the integrity of surrounding open spaces as a natural resource.
- 8. To protect and conserve producing agricultural lands as a natural resource where appropriate, and, to recognize agriculture as a land use feature on the general plan.

- 9. To develop and extract mineral resources with minimum disturbance to the environment and provide for the eventual reclamation of these areas to uses consistent with the open space needs of the population.
- 10. To provide open space lands adequate for the protection of public health and safety.
- 11. To provide a comprehensive system of diversified outdoor recreation spaces meeting the needs of the population, and fully coordinated and adequately supported by the appropriate level of government.
- 12. To identify and preserve recreation and open space opportunities associated with significant archeological, historical and cultural resources.

The chapter on <u>Policies</u> presents 38 policies to achieve the stated goals. Most of these policies are of special importance to planning for the CDCA:

- 1. Limit the extent and intensity of development in unstable soil areas, steep terrain, stream and river beds, fault zones, and other hazardous or damage-prone areas.
 - 2. Use effective mitigating measures for public and private developments allowed within areas with geologic or soil limitations.
 - 3. For developments in steep terrain, minimize changes from natural grades and adapt structures to natural conditions.
 - 4. Protect, restore and improve soils in valuable agricultural lands, watersheds, erosion-damaged areas, and flood-prone areas.
 - 5. Limit off-road vehicle use to suitable areas where damage to soil and vegetation will be minimal.
 - 6. Protect remaining natural watershed, natural drainage beds, and water recharge areas to assure maximum recovery of native water and preservation of natural plant and animal life.
 - 7. Direct development to areas where water and sanitation services can be provided at minimal public cost.
 - 8. Direct development to areas where the effect of

associated air and water contamination and related public costs can be minimized.

- 9. Restrict development in areas affected by extreme air and water pollution hazards until such conditions can be alleviated through prevention and control programs.
- 10. Strengthen existing air and water pollution prevention and control programs....
- 12. Actively encourage development of new energy sources as well as new technology which will conserve existing sources.
- 13. Stabilize and, where possible, reduce per capita consumption of energy resources.
- 14. Designate wildlife refuges necessary to provide a habitat for native fish, fowl and animals.
- 15. Protect rare and endangered wildlife species with limited or specialized habitat requirements.
- 16. Designate valuable ecologic areas worthy of preservation for scientific study....
- 18. Avoid subsidy by the general taxpayer of service costs for remote private developments.
- 19. Guide development to areas where services and facilities already exist and are under-used....
- 21. Protect productive agricultural lands from premature urbanization.
- 22. Protect mineral reserves from encroachment by incompatible residential development.
- 23. Control extractive processes to prevent excessive air, noise, water, and visual pollution and disturbance in nearby residential areas.
- 24. Restore depleted mineral extraction sites for alternate open space uses....
- 26, Limit development in areas of significant hazards such as flood plains, high fire-risk areas, and airport landing and take-off zones....
- 28. Retain publicly owned lands, both urban and rural, in public ownership for open space and

recreation purposes....

- 31. Preserve all sites of known historical, archeological and cultural importance.
- 32. Preserve areas of special scenic beauty....
- 38. Obtain a balance between economic development and environmental protection to benefit the greatest number of people for the greatest number of years.

The Conservation and Open Space Elements Report includes a series of maps of the Desert showing geologic features; soil factors; surface water and drainage features; plant and animal resources; rare and endangered wildlife habitat; and major public land ownership. A separate Open Space Policy Guide Map is included for the Desert Planning Area.

Scenic Routes Element

On September 10, 1974, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Scenic Routes Element. Prior to that time, the County succeeded in obtaining official designation of one of the eligible State Scenic Highways in the County--a portion of Route 38 in the San Bernardino Mountains.

As stated in the section on <u>Issues</u>, the relationship of scenic corridors to open space is pointed out:

Open space serves a variety of functions. Most obvious are its recreational and scenic functions. Scenic corridor open space can also be structural in nature by shaping and guiding development. It can be protective by discouraging unwise development in flood plains and earthquake zones; and it can be productive if used for agricultural, watershed protection or forest management purposes...

The Element is not limited to automobile routes; as indicated in the introduction of Chapter II: The Plan:

This plan differs from the State Scenic Highway Plan in that it provides for the inclusion of County roads and selected travel routes designed for other than automobile travel. This expands the application of the scenic corridor concept beyond the scenic needs of the automobile traveller to the scenic needs of those who walk, bicycle or ride horseback.

The Element includes a list of 25 policies, three of which are particularly important to the California Desert Plan:

- New or relocated utility lines should be placed underground whenever feasible....
- ·Alignment of new transmission and distribution lines should be such that the lines do not harm scenic resources nor the visual environment...
- ·All efforts should be made to identify, protect and enhance all historical and archeological points of interest within the scenic corridor.

Numerous State and County highways in the Desert are indicated as Countywide Scenic Routes, chief of which are Interstate 15, Interstate 40, and U. S. Route 395.

One of the recommended actions of the <u>Plan Implementation</u> <u>Program</u> is:

Support U. S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, State Department of Parks and Recreation, County Regional Parks Department and other land and recreation management agencies in their programs for improved public recreation facilities, i.e., picnic areas, campgrounds, interpretive sites, etc. in areas served by Scenic Routes.

Noise Element

The Noise Element was adopted September 10, 1974. Under the heading of Scope of the Element, there is this statement:

The Noise Element establishes a method for carefully considering noise and its resolution through good land use planning. This approach represents a long-term commitment of land use controls to noise environments as a method of promoting, protecting and securing the public health, safety, and general welfare....

In <u>Chapter II: The Plan</u> under the subheading of <u>Land Use</u> <u>Categories by Major Land Use Activities</u>, natural open space and undeveloped land are listed among such uses as rifle ranges and motorcycle parks as "Insensitive Land Uses". However, wild life sanctuaries are classified as "Very Sensitive Land Uses".

The 1978 Preliminary Plan under Goals and Policies presents the following noise goal: "Require that noise levels throughout the County are not detrimental to human physical or mental health or to rare and endangered animal species." (Underlining added).

Seismic Safety and Public Safety Element

On September 10, 1974, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Seismic Safety and Public Safety Element. Background information was provided in the Seismic Safety and Public Safety Element Background Report Volume II, published by the County Planning Department in July, 1974.

In regard to seismic hazards in the Desert, there is this statement under the heading <u>Seismic and Geological Hazards</u> Policy Plan:

Damages to structures due to fault displacement in the Desert Planning Area must be considered as slight, since there are no known active faults that traverse desert communities. However, there are a large number of earthquake faults that may prove to be potentially hazardous in the future development of the desert. Special hazard studies identifying the hazard zones should, therefore, be conducted on the major active faults in the desert: the Pinto Mountain fault, located near Twenty-nine Palms: the active Manix fault in the east-central Mojave Desert; the Garlock fault which is the second largest fault in California; and six large. northwest trending faults, the Helendale, Lockhart-Lenwood, Harper-Camp Rock-Emerson, Calico-Mesquite, Pisgah and Ludlow faults.

Volcanic and blowsand hazards are also mentioned.

Although potential volcanic activities exist in San Bernardino County, they should not cause undue anxiety as they are widely removed from inhabited areas. In addition, the Pisgah and Amboy cinder cones, as well as a large number located east of Baker, are generally considered dormant, though not necessarily extinct. Since many volcanic areas are under the control of the Bureau of Land Management, landuse-plans should consider the retention of some of these lands for recreation, open space, wildlife and natural phenomena reserves and preserves...

Wind blown sand is the most important form of erosion in the Desert Planning Area. However, the identification of this form of erosion was beyond the scope of this Element.

One of the seismic <u>Policies</u> is: "Promote open space land uses on land determined unfit for structures of human occupancy."

The Flood Hazard Policy Plan reports that flooding "...has

long been recognized as a serious problem in San Bernardino County....". As for the flooding in the Desert, there is this statement:

It should be recognized, however, that there are large portions of the County, particularly the Desert portion, where flood-prone areas have not been identified due to lack of information.

Three of the flood hazard <u>Policies</u> are pertinent to the California Desert Study:

- 4. Develop alternative uses for flood plain areas, such as parks, greenbelts, golf courses, and wildlife refuges....
- 7. Prevent the construction of all structures of human occupancy, as well as critical facilities, within the defined flood hazard area....
- 8. Prohibit the occupancy or encroachment of any structure, improvement or development that would obstruct the flow of water in a designated floodway on the flood plain....

Several maps are included in the Seismic Safety and Public Safety Element. Map Number 2: Seismic and Geologic Hazard Management indicates various hazard zones in the Desert Area, Map Number 4 shows degrees of slope stability, Map Number 5 indicates the Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zones, and Map Number 7 depicts flood hazard, management, flood protection, and drainage features in the Desert Area.

Recreation Element

A General Plan of Regional Parks was adopted by reference as part of the County General Plan (adopted June 6, 1966). The Plan was divided into four different "recreation environments": the valley area, the mountains, the Mojave Desert, and the Colorado River area. The Mojave Desert area coincides with that portion of San Bernardino County within the CDCA.

Two of the seven Goals and Objectives are of special importance to the Desert Study:

- 3. To protect and preserve as many of the County's recreation resources as possible....
- 5. Wherever possible, to protect and include within regional parks areas having historic or scenic values of regional significance.

The Plan proposes two types of recreational open space in the Desert:

It is recommended that two distinct types of regional parks be provided in the desert portions of the County. The first would be "green parks" having trees, grass areas, and water features wherever possible. They would primarily serve the existing desert communities, as well as provide day and overnight stopping places for travelers. Therefore, such parks should be located adjacent to major highways, at existing oases or water features, and as conveniently located as possible to the three major population areas in the desert.

The other principal type of recreation area envisioned in the desert are large, natural desert parks. These would be relatively undisturbed desert areas with development consisting chiefly of safe access, protection and adequate day use and overnight facilities.

These large areas can only be practically achieved by identifying, for recreation use, land administered by the Bureau of Land Management. Consequently, the survey of potential sites was carried on in cooperation with that agency. The areas defined have interesting combinations of mountain formations, important geological features, outstanding desert flora, and significant historical sites.

The adopted Plan Map indicates numerous proposed desert parks, among which are The Pinnacles, Kingston Mountains, Clark Mountains, Cinder Cones, Cima Dome, New York Mountains, Calico Resources Conservation Area, Barstow Regional Park, Mojave Narrows Regional Park, Oro Grande Regional Park, Granite Mountains, Newberry Mountains, Providence Mountains, Turtle Mountains, Chemehuevi Mountains, and Whipple Mountains.

Joint Utilities Management Plan

The <u>Joint Utilities Management Plan</u> was adopted as an element of the County General Plan on May 17, 1976. The reasons for preparing the Plan are presented in the <u>Synopsis</u>:

...First and foremost, the plan will aid considerably in minimizing the adverse impacts associated with siting major utilities and transmission corridors. Second, the plan will insure that there is adequate and enlightened participation in and review of energy matters by citizens and local governments. Third, the plan proposes measures

to conserve energy while controlling peak load demand. Fourth, it encourages the use of energy sources that have minimal impact on the environment. In sum, the Joint Utilities Management Plan is intended to serve as a policy document for the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, the State Energy Commission, other governmental and private agencies, and individuals on all major energy related issues in San Bernardino County....

Background information for the Plan is presented in the <u>Technical Background Document of the San Bernardino County Joint Utilities Management Program</u>, dated November, 1975. That document deals with four major topics: energy regulation; energy supply and demand; alternative sources of fuel generating techniques; and a methodology for facility siting.

In the chapter on <u>Goals</u>, <u>Policies</u>, <u>and Programs</u>, one of the goals is: "Encourage the development of alternative energy sources which have a minimum adverse effect upon the environment." The 13 policies are categorized under four separate headings: Siting; Energy Conservation/Demand Management; Alternate Sources; and Review and Participation.

The Plan addresses six major types of utility facilities:

- 1. Fossil-fuel power plants,
- 2. Nuclear power plants,
- 3. Electrical substations,
- 4. Electrical transmission lines (220 kv and above),
- 5. Fuel pipelines, and
- 6. Fuel storage.

The Plan also addresses the existing energy situation and potential short and long term County actions and solutions. It also contains an energy facility siting analysis, siting criteria, a community concerns map, and numerous siting analysis maps--including separate maps for the Desert. As pointed out in the Introduction of the Plan:

...the Mojave Desert area of San Bernardino County is increasingly being viewed as a major siting area for energy production, storage and distribution facilities for the entire Southern California Region....

This Element is a document of great interest and value to the California Desert Planning Program.

Commentary

The San Bernardino County General Plan is complete with all of the State-mandated elements. The JUMP Element and the Regional Parks Element are documents which should prove to be of considerable value to the California Desert Planning Program. The General Plan was organized so that it recognized the Desert as one of three planning areas in the County, and that recognition should also prove to be of value to planning efforts in the CDCA.

The fact that the County Planning Department has recently undertaken a major revision of the County General Plan indicates a strong staff commitment to on-going comprehensive planning. The 1978 Preliminary Plan consolidates the various Countywide and area policies into one document, rather than to have them scattered among numerous elements and community plans.

Zoning consistency is said to be moderately complete. Progress toward more complete consistency will depend upon acceptance and adoption of the Revised General Plan. Countywide, growth control or growth management do not appear to be topics of great interest or concern.

ORV activity, BLM land trades, federal energy policies, access problems in "checkerboard" lands, State school lands disposal, and Desert recreation are some of the principal County concerns in regard to the California Desert Study.

In summary, it appears to be rather important that the Desert Plan staff work closely with County staff during the next several months while the 1978 County Preliminary Plan and the evolving California Desert Plan are being formulated, refined, and publicly reviewed.

City of Adelanto

Introduction

The City of Adelanto is located to the west of the City of Victorville in a broad, flat area of the Victor Valley. The economy of the City is dependent upon George Air Force Base which is adjacent to the easterly boundary of Adelanto.

The area of the City is 22.5 square miles, and the population as of April, 1978 was estimated to be 2,260. The adopted Sphere of Influence covers about 72 square miles, and within the northerly part of the Sphere there are almost 6 square miles of BLM land.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element was part of the <u>City of Adelanto General Plan</u> which was prepared by a consulting firm and adopted on July 25, 1973. One of the <u>Overall General Plan Goals</u> is: "To preserve the natural features of Adelanto's environment which support the rural desert living life styles of its residents and guests."

A revised Land Use Element was recently adopted in the early part of 1978. One of the <u>Goals</u> of the revised Element is interesting: "Maximize environmentally hazardous areas for industrial uses compatible with the harsh environmental elements."

The proposed pattern for the land surrounding the core of the City is described as:

...a large area designated as "Desert Living". This area has also been constructed in a reducing pattern, with the closest in areas having a suggested minimum parcel size of one acre, and the furthest-out areas having a suggested minimum parcel size of four acres....

The City appears to have resolved the matter of zoning consistency by making the Land Use Element Map the same as the Zoning Map. In the Land Use Element text, under <u>Description of the Plan</u>, there is this statement: "The Land Use Map coincides with the Official Zoning Map."

Circulation Element

The Circulation Element, also known as the Master Plan of Highways, is part of the adopted General Plan. It concentrates on three categories of highways:

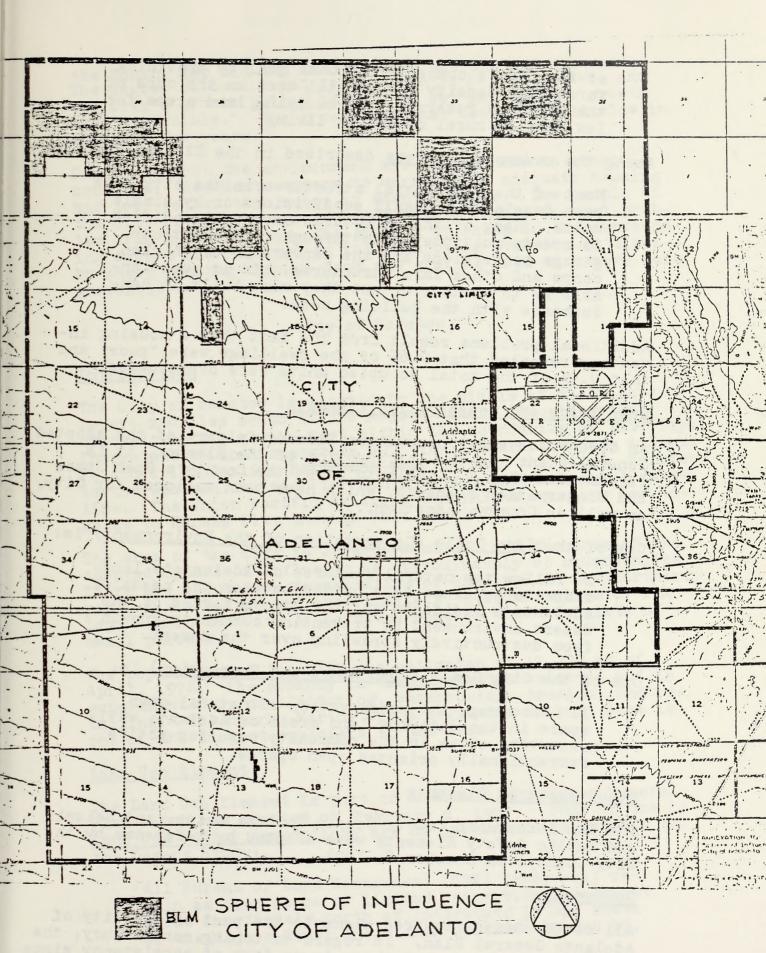
- 1. The U.S. 395 expressway-freeway;
- 2. Major highways; and
- 3. Secondary highways.

Virtually all of the major and secondary highways are planned along section lines, and, as stated at the end of the Element text: "Taken together, these highways should provide an excellent--but not over-planned--highway system suitable to Adelanto's desert lifestyle."

Housing Element

The adopted General Plan included a <u>Housing Element</u>. One of the <u>Goals</u> is:

Encourage housing patterns to fit the availability of supporting services and planned land use intensity



of the City's concentric growth goal by providing for higher density residential uses in the core of the City and reserving the outlying land areas for low density rural or desert living.

Among the numerous Problems described in the Element is this:

Most of the residential structures in the city have been developed in small subdivisions or by single units. Many of the structures have been modified to create multiple units through room additions, garage conversions and the conversion of chicken coops and other farm structures. It is questionable as to whether or not they were built in conformance with the building code.

Additional problems result from the fact that a housing inventory revealed that 9.6% of the dwellings were "poor" and that 9.5% of the total occupied units were overcrowded.

Open Space and Conservation Elements

An Open Space and Conservation Element is part of the adopted General Plan. In the <u>Introduction</u> of the Element, it is recommended that "...Adelanto adopt the County's Open Space and Conservation Elements, which have been tailored for City, as well as County, adoption...".

One of the City Goals (Conservation of the Environment) is:

2. Allow the natural features of Adelanto's landscape to continue as a buffer between the needs of Adelanto's residents and the strong forces of the desert environment by preventing community growth from destructively sprawling over the desert.

One of the City Goals (Open Space and Recreation) is:

2. Encourage the preservation of natural open space in the outlying land areas of Adelanto while reserving sites in the community core for active recreationally oriented open spaces.

Other Required Elements

The San Bernardino County Scenic Routes; Noise; and Seismic and Public Safety Elements were adopted by reference by the City Council on October 8, 1974.

Commentary

All of the State-required elements are part of the City of Adelanto General Plan. In regard to zoning consistency, the City's position is that there is no lack of consistency since

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the Zoning Map and the Land Use Map are one and the same. The degree of commitment to the Plan is not excessive, and the City's growth policy is said to be "get all the growth that's possible." The growth rate has been somewhat slow in the past few years.

Concerns about the environment are subordinate to economic concerns. Residents appear to worry about adequate housing and jobs rather than noise or scenic values. The people of the City of Adelanto are subjected to a rather unusual problem from time to time. The grazing of sheep in the surrounding desert has resulted in the town being over-run at times by sheep passing through from one grazing area to others more grazeable.

City of Barstow

Introduction

The City of Barstow is located in the middle of the Mojave Desert and lies south of the Mojave River. Two important cross-country highways meet within the boundaries of the City: Interstate 15 and Interstate 40. The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe and Union Pacific Railroads pass through the City. Barstow is the western division for Santa Fe's transcontinental mainline. The Union Pacific Railroad's mainline connects Los Angeles to Kansas City through Salt Lake City.

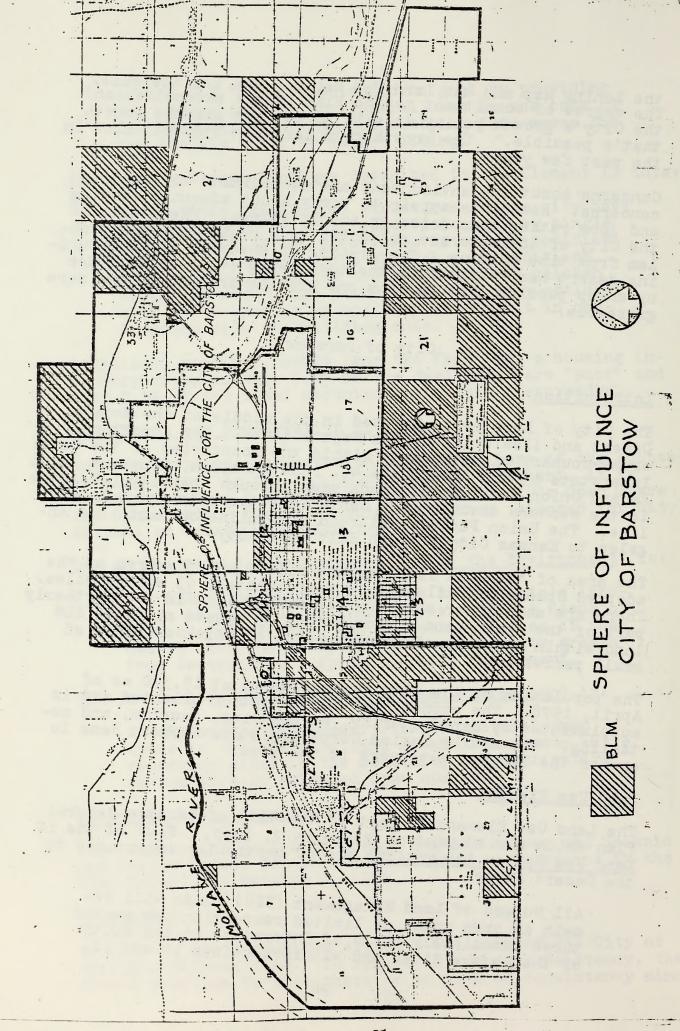
The area of the City is 22 square miles, and the area of the adopted Sphere of Influence is approximately 63 square miles. There are about four square miles of BIM land in the northerly part of the Sphere and approximately $3\frac{1}{2}$ square miles of BIM land within the City of Barstow--some of which consists of small parcels.

The population of the City was estimated at 17,370 as of April, 1978. The economy is transportation-oriented and is supplemented by manufacturing, warehousing, tourism, and retailing. The nearby Marine Corps Logistics Support Base is one of the largest employers in the area.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element is part of the City of Barstow General Plan which was adopted on February 2, 1977. Four of the 12 Land Use Policy Assumptions are of particular importance to the Desert Study:

·All Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands will remain as open space or limited recreation use except those immediately north of Interstate 15 and south of the Mojave River and within sections 10 and 12.



- ·Lands northerly of the Mojave River and under private ownership will be limited to present uses until such time as adequate public services and facilities can be provided....
- •Existing land uses subject to flooding or intensive noise distribution should be phased out and relocated elsewhere.
- •The Bureau of Land Management should be encouraged to consolidate open space lands through land trades to better organize open space areas....

There are five categories of Open Space indicated on the Land Use Element Map: <u>Parks</u>, <u>BLM Lands</u>, <u>Flood Plain</u>, <u>Flood Plain</u> <u>Overflow Limits</u>, and <u>Possible BLM Lands</u>. It is City policy to require a five acre minimum parcel size in open space lands.

Housing Element

One of the <u>Objectives</u> of the Housing Element is: "Elimination, as soon as possible, of dwellings which are clearly uninhabitable and replace these, where appropriate, with housing that is decent, safe, and sanitary."

One of the proposed implementation measures of the Element is Land Cost Write-Downs in Redevelopment Areas which is explained by the following statement:

It is recognized that there is a need for additional middle-income housing in Barstow. These needs could be fulfilled in redevelopment areas through an incentive program that would provide land write-downs. Land is a major component of housing production, often amounting to at least 25 percent of total costs. If the redevelopment agency provided land at lower costs to developers, it would enhance the potential for new housing with adequate amenity packages as well as meeting the needs of moderate-income families.

Open Space and Conservation Elements

Three major open space and conservation programs are parts of the Open Space and Conservation Elements adopted on February 2, 1977. The <u>Safety Program</u> proposes two steps: (1) Eliminate existing structures from flood hazard areas, and (2) Prevent the construction of new structures in flood hazard areas and along seismic fault traces. The <u>Water Conservation and Recycling Program</u> also proposes two steps: (1) Investigate the potential for importing and treating wastewater from the Victorville area, and (2) Evaluate the potential for additional treatment and recycling both local

wastewater and existing degraded groundwaters, to be used at least for agricultural purposes, control of sandblow, recreational opportunities, and landscape irrigation. The third program is called a <u>Program to Control the Dispersion of Development</u> which presents three steps: (1) Limit utility and service extensions to encourage the concentration of development within the central City, (2) Zone outlying areas to prevent intensive development; preserve for agricultural and/or grazing purposes, and (3) Encourage expansion of BLM lands to help control outward development expansion.

Scenic Highways Element

The Scenic Highways Element was adopted on February 2, 1977. One of the proposals to implement the Element is under the heading of Corridor Protection Measures and is quoted here:

The long-term control, management, and use of land in the corridor is critical to the establishment of a scenic highway. Without adequate protection, the character of the corridor through which a scenic highway passes may be altered enough in time to diminish or completely destroy the corridor's scenic value. The most critical part of the entire scenic highway program is its implementation by the local jurisdiction: the adoption of standards most appropriate to carry out the intent of the program in a given corridor, and their application and enforcement upon lands in private ownership through the regulatory power of local jurisdictions.

Interstate 15, which passes through the City of Barstow, is part of the California Scenic Highway System and is eligible for official designation between its junctions with State Highways 58 and 127.

Noise Element

The Noise Element, which was also adopted on February 2, 1977, lists the following actions under Recommended Implementation Programs:

- ·Seek State and County assistance for future noise studies including quieter transportation systems, community noise surveys, and monitoring.
- ·Adopt specific noise criteria for use in the purchase of all City-owned or authorized motor vehicles and equipment.
- The City, may, itself, wish to establish more comprehensive enforcement procedures to effect compliance

with such noise standards.

Seismic Safety and Safety Elements

On February 2, 1977, the Seismic and Public Elements were adopted. Four of the seven measures listed under Recommended Implementation Programs are:

- ·Major high-risk areas, such as the Mojave River Basin, are recommended for permanent open space use.
- .Moderate risk areas are recommended for low intensity land uses and combinations of open space and recreational uses.
- Particular steep terrain in the few hillside areas of the City are recommended for permanent open space or should be subject to intensive engineering and geologic investigations prior to construction...
- No emergency or critical-use facility should be located directly across a fault trace. Habitable structures planned for development close to a fault trace should be constructed only upon detailed investigation and recommendation as to potential fault activity.

In regard to Flood Hazards, five of the eight measures to reduce flood hazards are quoted here:

- •Minimize unjustifiable costs to governmental units and the general public caused by development in flood hazard areas....
- ·Develop_alternative uses for floodplain areas such as parks, greenbelts, golf courses, etc.
- •Prevent the construction of all structures for human occupancy, as well as critical-use facilities, within the defined flood hazard area.
- Where development already exists, effectuate a program aimed at providing protection from floods or remove existing structures and relocate existing residents from the floodway for reasons of public health and safety.
- •Prohibit the occupancy or encroachment of any structure, improvement or development that would obstruct the flow of water in a designated floodway or the floodplain.

Under Sandblow Hazards, there is this statement:

The sandblow problem has been intensified by clearing land for agriculture or development purposes and by abandoning agricultural land, both exposing the land to severe blow hazard. Existing natural vegetation has been damaged by off-road vehicle travel and by other forms of plant destruction....

One of the proposed actions is:

...that within a designated wind hazard area, the City and County adopt and enforce ordinances regulating such activities as off-road vehicle use, land use and earth movement, and encroachment on the natural habitat, within the Mojave River area.

Commentary

The City of Barstow General Plan reflects an awareness of the large amounts of BLM lands within and around the City's Sphere of Influence and within the City itself. Policies in the Land Use Element and the Open Space and Conservation Elements indicate that City officials will be depending upon the California Desert Plan to assist in shaping the urban form of the City and to prevent incompatible land uses in surrounding open space lands.

Commitment to the Barstow General Plan is said to be moderate, and there is no apparent strong movement toward growth control, since the present rate of growth is modest. Work remains to be done to attain consistency of zoning with the General Plan. The Land Use Element is presently being reviewed, and a Circulation Element has not yet been adopted.

In regard to local concerns about the California Desert Planning Program, the need for effective BLM land trades in the area ranks high. People also seem to be concerned about ORV recreational use of the Desert and loss of mining rights. There is some anxiety about air quality but mostly in terms of dust problems. There are minor concerns about scenic values and grazing rights.

City of Needles

Introduction

The City of Needles is located in the eastern-most portion of the County of San Bernardino on the Colorado River. The elevation is about 500 feet above sea level. Two main

transportation-circulation arteries link the City to the eastern and western parts of the country. One is Interstate 40, and the other is the Santa Fe Railroad.

The area of the City is 14.5 square miles, and the area of the City's adopted Sphere of Influence is about 198 square miles. Most of the land within the Sphere is in some form of Federal ownership, with well over half of it administered by the BLM.

The economy of the City is recreation-tourism-oriented.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element is part of the <u>General Plan for the City of Needles</u> which was prepared by the San Bernardino County Planning Department. The City Council adopted the Plan on May 28, 1968. The Plan included several <u>Assumptions</u>, of which two are quoted here:

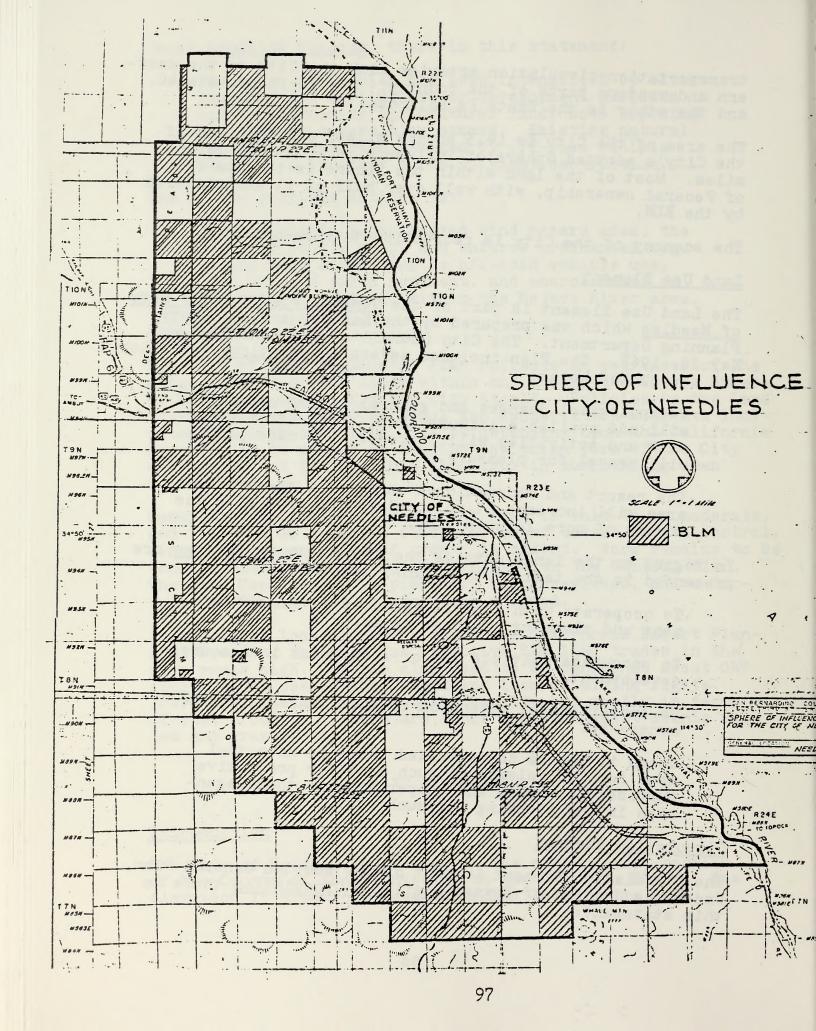
- •Technological changes and general living conditions will add available leisure time. Recreation interests and activities will increase, and more people will travel for pleasure.
- •The resort and recreational aspects of the Needles area will increase at an accelerating rate with the advent of more leisure time.

In regard to the lands outside the City, four <u>Objectives</u> are presented in the text of the Plan:

- ·To cooperate with federal agencies in the management and planning of these areas.
- .To encourage multiple use of such areas in resource development.
- .To encourage the retention of such lands in public ownership.
- ·Where it can be demonstrated there is an actual need for the release of such land for productive purpose, to assist and cooperate with those agencies in the planning for such use.

Circulation Element

The Circulation Element is part of the adopted General Plan. Under the heading of <u>Transportation & Circulation</u> there is this statement:



Circulation and transportation is a link which overcomes the distance between people and facilities. A well conceived system assists in the orderly growth of the entire area. It must be planned in conjunction with other land development if either is to work properly.

Housing Element

The City of Needles does not have an adopted Housing Element since the resolution adopting the General Plan mentioned only the Land Use and Circulation Elements. However, the Plan includes a brief discussion of housing and describes the major goals of a housing element as:

- ·Increased recognition of housing problems and needs in General Plan activities.
- Providing the impetus for the orderly development of adequate, safe and sanitary accommodations for all the citizens.

Other Required Elements

The City Council, on September 16, 1974, adopted by reference the Scenic Routes; Noise; and Seismic and Public Safety Elements of the County of San Bernardino General Plan.

The County Open Space Element was also adopted by reference (August 21, 1973), and it is believed by City personnel that the City Council had intended to also adopt the County Conservation Element; however, the resolution of adoption actually mentioned only the Open Space Element.

Commentary

An interesting feature of the General Plan of the City of Needles is that it recognizes a planning area much larger than that of the City itself. As in the City of Barstow, the citizens of Needles are apparently aware of the influence that the large amounts of surrounding federal land will have upon the future of their community. The people of Needles will regard the California Desert Plan with great interest.

Commitment to the General Plan is said to be moderate, and City staff members feel that zoning is consistent with the Plan. Members of the community are growth-oriented, but, in recent years, the growth rate has been very slow.

Some of the concerns about the Desert Study are that the wilderness area proposals are a "threat", that mineral exploration should not be hindered, that there should be free access

to public lands, and that recreation in the surrounding Desert is of great economic importance to the City. There is considerable anxiety about the high cost of energy in the City, and there is support for new energy plants in the vicinity as long as air quality is not adversely affected. There is community support for additional agriculture in the Needles Valley.

City of Victorville

Introduction

The City of Victorville is located in the southwestern portion of the Mojave Desert about 38 miles north of the City of San Bernardino. The City is bisected by the Mojave River, and its elevation is about 2,700 feet. Rainfall is generally less than ten inches per year.

The area of the City is 30.6 square miles, and the area of the adopted Sphere of Influence is approximately 48 square miles. Parcels of BLM land are located in Sections 27, 28, and 29 in the northerly part of the City.

The City of Victorville had an estimated population of 14,200 as of April, 1978. The City serves as a commercial center for the Victor Valley; the additional economy is centered on recreation, tourism, military, cement manufacturing, and some local agriculture.

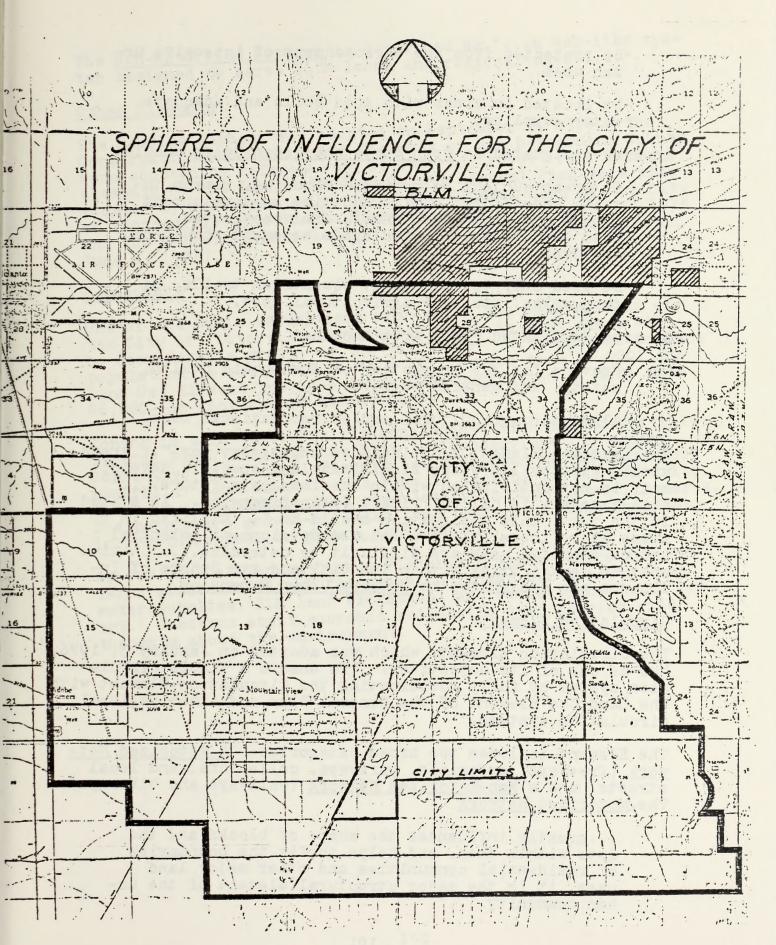
Land Use Element

The Land Use Element, which was adopted on January 5, 1976, projects a "...population of approximately 48,354 by the year 1990." One of the objectives of the Element is: "To discourage residential development in areas where no development exists and where limited urban services are available."

One of the future land use categories is <u>Natural Environment</u> <u>Areas</u> which is described as:

...those areas that possess extreme development constraints or are particularly well suited for agriculture purposes and should be maintained in a largely undeveloped state. Only very light intensity land uses such as agricultural and/or recreational activities should be provided for in these areas....

Three sub-categories of open space lands are presented under Natural Environment Areas. They are: Agriculture; Open Space and Green Belts; and Flood Areas. As stated in the text, an area designated Agriculture should:



- ·Be protected from the encroachment of intensive urban uses.
- ·Be located in areas with good soils and adequate water supplies.

An area designated as Open Space and Green Belts should:

- ·In areas subject to periodic flooding, remain totally undeveloped until such time as development occurs and drainage channels are constructed. Even then, however, open space easement should be acquired.
- ·Be used only for bikeways, equestrian trails, nature walks, etc., or agricultural uses.

An area designated Flood Area should:

- ·Provide for the protection of the public health, safety, and general welfare.
- ·Allow for agricultural and/or recreational uses.

The Land Use Element also includes a category for "...areas within Victorville where significant and specific development is not anticipated within the immediate future...". This category is called <u>Primary Urban Expansion</u>. As stated in the text, this designation should be "...utilized in areas where there exists a reduced development potential and/or specific uses are difficult to determine...". Almost 20 square miles within the City and its Sphere of Influence are designated as <u>Primary Urban Expansion</u>.

Circulation Element

The Circulation Element, which was adopted on January 5, 1976, has as one of its objectives: "To ensure a viable circulation system by fully coordinating the Circulation Element with the Land Use Element of the General Plan and other regional circulation systems."

The Element includes two broad categories: A Motorized Network (freeways, arterials, parkways, collectors, and local streets) and a Non-Motorized Network (walkways and bikeways). The Motorized Network

...greatly influences the shape of blocks and the lots within them, and helps to fix the boundaries of residential communities and other major land uses, it is the major structural element of the urban community....".

The Non-Motorized Network is described as "...a web-like system designed to serve both local and regional needs...".

Other Elements

The Housing Element was adopted on September 8, 1970. The Conservation and Open Space Elements of San Bernardino County were adopted by reference on October 25, 1974. Four other elements of the San Bernardino County General Plan were also adopted by reference as parts of the General Plan of the City of Victorville (the Scenic Highways Element on March 31, 1975, and the Noise, Seismic Safety, and Public Safety Elements on June 2, 1975).

Commentary

One of the basic assumptions upon which the General Plan of the City of Victorville apparently rests is that there will be considerable growth to the year 1990. Although the present population is estimated to be a little more than 14,000, the Land Use Element provides for a 1990 population of more than 48,000--an increase of 242 percent.

Zoning is said to be "fairly consistent" with the Victorville General Plan, although the Plan is "subservient" to zoning. Currently, the General Plan is being amended to make it "more general". Commitment to the Plan is lacking in the community. There is considerable land speculation in the Victorville area. The people are growth-oriented, and there is little interest in growth control or growth management.

As for the California Desert Planning Program, there are concerns about additional transmission lines, air quality, and water supplies, BLM land exchanges, and recreation in the Desert. Concerns about economic well-being tend to over-ride thoughts about the environment.

III. THOSE PORTIONS OF LOS ANGELES, KERN, INYO, AND MONO COUNTIES WITHIN THE CALIFORNIA DESERT CONSERVATION AREA

Introduction

This section of the report deals with a group of four counties and four cities that are either partly or wholly within the CDCA: the northeasterly one-quarter of Los Angeles County, including the Cities of Lancaster and Palmdale; the easterly third of Kern County, including the Cities of California City and Ridgecrest; most of Inyo County; and the southeasterly tip of Mono County.

Los Angeles County

Preface

In 1968, Los Angeles County initiated a Countywide planning program. The first phase was culminated on October 1, 1970, when the Board of Supervisors adopted the Environmental Development Guide (EDG) as a preliminary general plan. The EDG identified major problems and stated relevant goals and policies.

Soon after the adoption of the <u>EDG</u>, a number of court decisions and amendments to State planning law occurred which led the County to amend the <u>EDG</u>. The first major amendment resulted in a new plan entitled the <u>General Plan of Los Angeles County</u> and which was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on June 28, 1973. The 1973 Plan amended the Open Space and Land Use Elements of the <u>EDG</u> and added a Conservation Element. Later, the Noise, Safety, Seismic Safety, and Scenic Highway Elements were adopted as parts of the 1973 Plan. On March 12, 1975, the Superior Court of the County of Los Angeles invalidated the 1973 Plan "...for its having been adopted without a proper foundational EIR....".

In late 1973, a comprehensive planning program for North Los Angeles County (including the Antelope Valley) was undertaken by a consultant-government team. On November 30, 1975, the Areawide General Plan for the Antelope Valley was published for citizen review. In January, 1978, the Los Angeles County Preliminary General Plan Summary was published by the County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning.

The above discussion suggests that the Los Angeles County General Plan is in a state of flux. Thus the following discussion of County plans for the Antelope Valley will be in general terms.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element, as proposed in the 1975 Antelope Valley Plan, presents four classes of communities: (1) Primary Urban Development Area, (2) Rural Communities, (3) Rural Villages, and (4) General Rural Areas. The first applies to existing major development having a significant population base; the second applies to settlements with a minimum of 300 permanent residents relatively close together, the third applies to areas with a resident population under 300, and the fourth includes all developable lands outside the first three areas.

Two other categories of interest to the Desert Study are <u>Open Space</u> (lands under public or private ownership that are essentially free of structures and roads, and maintained in an open or natural state) and <u>Special Management Areas</u> (areas either in need of <u>Hillside Management</u>, <u>Floodplains Management</u>, <u>Habitat Management</u>, <u>Noise Impact Management</u>, or <u>Seismic Safety Management</u>.

The 1975 proposed Land Use Element is based upon a population projection of 218,000 persons in the Antelope Valley region by 1995.

The 1978 Preliminary General Plan, referred to earlier in this section of the report, includes a Land Use Element in addition to the Conservation and Open Space; Land Use; Housing; Transportation; Public Utilities; and Economic Development Elements. As stated in the Introduction of the Land Use Element:

The Element's policies address the need to improve the land use decision making process, use land more efficiently, insure compatible development, conserve natural resources, and improve the coordination of planning.

Three of the five policies presented under <u>Conserve Resources</u> and <u>Enhance Environmental Quality</u> are relevant to the California Desert Study:

•Establish land use development controls that provide for the protection of significant biological resources, valuable watershed areas, and scenic lands as open space preserves.

Protect prime agricultural land by allowing only uses compatible with agriculture....

Protect known sand and gravel reserves from incompatible land uses.

The Land Use Policy Map has nine categories of future land

use, of which two are non-urban (Rural and Open Space). The intent of the Rural category is:

- 1. To provide areas for rural residential housing as a lifestyle option.
- 2. To maintain the character of rural communities.
- 3. To provide areas for agricultural and mineral production.
- 4. To preserve areas having significant natural and scenic resources.
- 5. To avoid development in areas having severe natural hazards.

The <u>Rural</u> residential density standards range from 1 d.u. per one acre to 1 d.u. per 20 acres, depending upon factors such as slope, access, and water availability. The <u>Open Space</u> category is intended for:

...areas either publicly or privately held which are used or intended to be used in a manner compatible with open space purposes such as outdoor recreation, resource conservation, hazard management and ecological preservation....

A maximum density of one unit per 20 acres "...may be consistent with the intent of this category so long as the biological resource is protected....".

Transportation/Circulation Element

In the <u>Introduction</u> of the proposed Circulation Element of the 1975 Antelope Valley Plan one of the basic assumptions presented is that there will be "...an international airport handling 1 million annual passengers (MAP) by 1980, 3 MAP by 1985, 8 MAP by 1990 and 12 MAP by 1995....".

The Element is concerned with five broad issues: internal urban-area circulation, rural circulation, inter-urban access, public transportation, and coordination of transportation planning.

A proposed Transportation Element is included in the 1978 Preliminary General Plan. It recommends strategies to improve public transportation, highway facilities, aviation facilities, and marine facilities "...while reducing accompanying environmental degradation...". One of the <u>Objectives</u> is: "A transportation system which is responsive to economic, environmental, energy conservation, and social needs at both the community and countywide level."

Under the heading of <u>Reduced Transportation-Related Degradation of the Environment</u>, two of the policies listed are:

- ·Stress environmental compatibility and improvement, including air quality, noise, ecology, and aesthetics in the provision of transportation....
- •Promote the undergrounding of electric and communication facilities, where feasible, to improve the aesthetic environment.

In the text of the proposed Transportation Element, there is an interesting statement included in the discussion of the Arterial Highway Network:

There are a few routes which traverse "Significant Ecological Areas" or "Hillside Management Areas," as identified in the Conservation and Open Space Element. Prior to the undertaking of any new construction on existing or proposed highways, alternative alignments or appropriate measures shall be investigated and implemented if feasible. If no feasible alternative alignment or measure exists, the project shall be performed in the most environmentally sensitive manner practical.

Housing Element

One of the important findings of the Housing Element of the 1975 Antelope Valley General Plan is that there is a shortage of low-cost housing in the Valley. Poor quality of housing is not generally as pressing a problem as it is in other parts of Los Angeles County. Based upon a population projection of 218,000 in 1995, the Element, under <u>Housing Projections</u>, projects a need for 40,144 new housing units in the Valley by 1995.

The Housing Element of the 1978 Preliminary General Plan has as one of its <u>Objectives</u>: "An adequate supply of housing to meet the needs of the County's year 2000 projection of 7,700,000 persons." Two of the policies listed under <u>Needs</u>, <u>Policies and Recommended Actions</u> are:

Provide for new urban residential development principally in those areas which are in close proximity to existing community services and facilities. Housing in rural communities shall be allowed only at densities which are supportive of the continuation of the rural character and lifestyle....

•Encourage the design of residential developments that will foster security and safety, and be sensitive to the natural environment.

Under the heading 1985 Policy Distribution of Lower Income Households Needing Housing Assistance, the Element indicates that the Antelope Valley will have 16,500 lower income households in 1985 of which 6,900 will be in need of housing assistance.

Conservation and Open Space Elements

The Conservation and Open Space Elements of the 1975 Antelope Valley Plan are parts of the <u>Environmental Resources Management Element</u> which also includes the Recreation, Scenic Highways, and Air Quality Elements. Open space and conservation are referred to in the <u>Introduction</u>:

As it is the overall objective of this analysis to present an integrative and comprehensive "multiple use" approach to environmental resource management, specific issues, policies and programs relating to "open space" are found in each of the areas covered by this element....

As with open space, conservation issues pervade Environmental Resources Management. The sections related to Natural Resource and Managed Resource Production deal especially with conservation issues.

Two of the four objectives listed under <u>Policies</u> pertain to open space and conservation:

- 1. Enhance, rehabilitate, and protect significant natural resources, including fragile ecological areas, unique natural features, and culturally significant sites.
- 2. Promote the wise development and conservation of managed renewable and non-renewable resources....

Numerous recommended policies are listed under the headings of <u>Natural Resources</u>, <u>Managed Resource Production</u>, <u>Hazardous Areas</u>, and <u>Recreation</u>.

The 1978 County Preliminary General Plan includes a Conservation and Open Space Element. As stated in the Introduction:

The Conservation and Open Space Element emphasizes the importance of conserving significant natural and cultural resources, and protecting the public from natural hazards. Major policy statements in the element respond to such needs as: (1) improving air quality; (2) ensuring an adequate, high quality supply of water; (3) reducing risks from flooding, seismic activity, landslides and wildland fires; (4) preserving natural features such as hillsides, soils, forests and significant plant and animal habitats; (5) preserving prime agricultural lands; (6) protecting major mineral resources; (7) conserving energy; (8) protecting scenic features; and (9) providing additional recreational sites.

Some of the policies that pertain to the Antelope Valley and the CDCA are quoted here:

- •Preserve prime agricultural lands, particularly those currently devoted to agricultural production.
- •Encourage continuing agricultural production through use of economic incentives (such as the California Land Conservation Act - Williamson Act).
- Preserve significant ecological areas and their associated buffer areas and provide for their protection by appropriate management measures including preservation, mitigation and enhancement....
- •Encourage the placement of low intensity uses, including compatible open space uses, adjacent to national forests, state and regional parks, and significant ecological areas, where necessary to protect these resources....
- •Protect and conserve existing mineral resources, encourage efficient production, and evaluate the extent of additional deposits.
- •Require reclamation of mineral extraction sites prior to abandonment....
- ·Support the conservation of all forms of energy by government, the business community, and individual citizens, and actively encourage efforts to develop new energy sources, including geothermal, thermal waste, solar, wind and ocean-related sources.
- •Encourage the use of solar energy for water and space heating.
- Protect the visual quality of highly scenic areas and views from public roadways, trails and from key vantage points.

- Protect cultural heritage resources including historical, archaeological, paleontological, and geological sites, and significant architectural structures.
- •Encourage public use and access to cultural heritage sites wherever possible, consistent with the proper protection, preservation and maintenance of these resources.
- Restrict urban development in areas subject to wildland fire, seismic and geologic hazards in order to minimize the risk to public safety.
- Restrict urban development in floodplains to protect life and property, avoid the need for new flood control works, and maintain natural watershed processes. Regulate development in tributary watersheds to prevent increased runoff, erosion, and siltation of streambeds.
- •Encourage the multiple use of flood inundation areas for recreation, agriculture, groundwater recharge and wildlife protection.
- ·Manage development in hillside areas in order to retain their natural and scenic character and minimize risks from fire, flood, mudslides, erosion and landslide hazards.
- Discourage urban development in high brush fire hazard areas, and develop stricter brush clearance ordinances to protect existing structures.
- Provide additional low intensity outdoor recreation sites in areas of high scenic and ecological values compatible with the protection of natural resources....
- Develop a countywide network of riding and hiking trails, bikeways, and scenic highways, utilizing them, where possible, as connectors between recreational areas....
- Designate appropriate areas for the use of off-road vehicles so as to avoid damage to the environment....

The Conservation and Open Space Policy Map "...depicts areas which are neither required nor appropriate for urban development...". There are three categories used on the Map: Committed or Proposed Open Space, Rural Hillside Area, and Other Rural and Agricultural Areas. The Special Management Areas Map "...provides a generalized graphic depiction of areas

requiring special treatment due to their natural, scenic and productive resource values or hazardous nature." The Map uses the following categories: National Forest Management Area, Open Space Easements and Dedications, Significant Ecological Area Buffers, Hill-side Management Areas, Potential Agricultural Preserves, Coastal Zone, Scenic Highways, Mineral Resource Management Areas, Floodplain Management Areas, and Major Fault Zones.

Scenic Highway Element

The Scenic Highway Element was adopted in January, 1975. It contains a statement of assets, problems, issues, and opportunities pertaining to scenic highways, followed by a statement of goals, policies, and programs which are directed toward alleviating the stated problems. As stated in the Introduction:

Throughout the element consideration has been given to protection of environmental, social, and economic values associated with esthetic scenic corridor resources and expansion of the opportunity for the enjoyment of these resources.

Under <u>Assets</u>, a scenic resource of the Desert is mentioned:
"...the floor of the desert in the Antelope Valley is carpeted with fragile wildflowers during the early spring months."

Among the 14 policies listed, at least these five pertain to planning for the CDCA:

- 3. Protect and enhance esthetic resources within corridors of designated scenic highways.
- 4. Establish and maintain rural scenic highways to provide access to scenic resources and serve recreational users....
- 8. Remove visual pollution from designated scenic highway corridors....
- 10. Increase governmental commitment to the designation of scenic highways and protection of scenic corridors....
- 13. Improve scenic highway coordination and implementation procedures between all levels of government....

Under Governmental Roles and Responsibilities, the federal role is suggested:

The federal government's role should be to provide encouragement primarily through the establishment of national goals, guidelines, and adequate funding for road construction, billboard removal, parks, open space, and conservation programs. Moreover, the federal government should provide technical assistance on scenic evaluation studies.

The Element proposes numerous scenic highways in the Desert area of the County, among which are portions of Pearblossom Highway, 90 Street West, and Gorman Post Road, to name a few.

The Environmental Resources Management Element of the 1975 Antelope Valley Plan includes scenic highways in the section entitled <u>Outdoor Recreation</u> in which there is this statement.

In the Planning Area, the view from the road is characterized by a variety of sights, including panoramic vistas of rugged mountains, steep canyon slopes covered with native chaparral and sage, extensive areas of the Mojave Desert, and rural or small-town settings.

One of the recommended <u>Recreation Policies</u> of that same element is: "High priority should be given for routes proposed for scenic corridors or bikeways that form linkages between recreation areas."

Noise Element

Under <u>Problems and Issues</u> of the Noise Element which was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in January, 1975, there is this statement:

...the increasing demand of a growing population for better, more convenient transportation facilities, coupled by inadequate noise control measures or land use controls to buffer residential areas from the noise generated by these facilities have moved the sources of noise closer to the people.

Three of the 15 noise policies have special meaning for the Desert Plan:

- 4. Reduce the present and future impact of excessive noise from transportation sources through judicious use of technology, planning, and regulatory measures....
- 8. Coordinate with, and assist, the various cities in dealing with the problem of noise and provide leadership and technical expertise when requested by other jurisdictions.

9. Coordinate with federal, state, and city governments in developing and implementing noise abatement programs....

The Noise Element of the Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan in the <u>Introduction</u> has this to say about the proposed Palmdale Airport:

Of greatest consequence in the future noise environment is the construction of an International Airport in Palmdale. This airport affects the noise environment along the proposed flight path and also along the major roadways servicing the airport. The number of vehicles assumed is based on projections made in the Circulation Element. Its impacts will result from (1) flight operations of the airport, (2) vehicles travelling to and from the airport, and, (3) traffic from population growth induced by the airport....

Seismic Safety Element

The Seismic Safety Element was adopted in January, 1975. In the <u>Introduction</u> of the Element, reference is made to the San Andreas Fault which trends through the southerly portion of the Antelope Valley:

The San Andreas Fault is, at its nearest point, about 38 miles from the center of the City of Los Angeles. Thus in historical time we have a great earthquake with associated fault rupture on the San Andreas Fault along the portion of the fault closest to Los Angeles....

Under the heading of <u>Opportunities</u>, another mention is made of the San Andreas Fault:

Other opportunities for the avoidance of seismic hazards can be recognized in the current pattern of urbanization. As an example, the San Andreas fault zone transverses sparsely populated, rural areas. Unlike the Newport-Inglewood fault zone, it has not yet been blanketed with intense development. The opportunity to avoid increased public exposure to earthquake hazards is present here as well as in other areas of similar geologic instability.

The Element presents the policy statements under <u>Statements</u> of <u>Policies</u>—three of which are quoted here:

2. Require all new development and selected existing development to comply with established seismic safety standards....

- 8. Restrict development within active or potentially active fault zones.
- 9. Adopt and enforce selective land use and building regulations within areas of high seismic hazard....

One of the recommended <u>Implementation Strategies</u> is: "4. Stress the increased application of <u>avoidance</u> strategies in areas subject to urban expansion or intensification."

The Seismic Safety Element of the Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan refers to the San Andreas Fault under <u>Existing Conditions</u>:

The most distinctive geologic feature in the area is the San Andreas Fault Zone which divides the southern (pacific plate) region from the northern (continental plate) region. In this fault zone, pressures of these two plates can trigger great movements, resulting in earthquakes. The last movement in this area occurred in 1857....

Most of the existing and proposed urban areas in the Antelope Valley lie within Zone I which is subject to "severe intensity" of seismic shaking.

Safety Element

The Safety Element was adopted in January, 1975. As stated in the <u>Introduction</u>, the Element "...is intended to identify and define programs to protect the community from fire and geologic hazards...". Problems due to flooding are not considered in the Safety Element, but are discussed in the County Water and Waste Management Element.

There are 15 courses of action listed under <u>Statement of Policies</u>. Seven of the policies are of special importance to planning in the CDCA:

- 1. Establish and enforce standards and criteria to reduce unacceptable levels of fire and geologic risk....
- 5. Develop stringent site criteria for construction in areas with fire and/or geologic problems, and prohibit construction if these criteria are not met.
- 6. Restrict widespread urban development in identified brush fire hazard areas....
- 9. Develop and support the use of new technology in the suppression and prevention of fires....

- 11. Improve programs and practices for dealing with land subsidence and erosion.
- 12. Expand public education programs pertaining to fires and geologic problems....
- 15. Increase cooperation and coordination between the various jurisdictions and agencies involved in fire protection and the mitigation of geologic problems.

One of the geologic hazards affecting the Antelope Valley is subsidence (the gradual sinking of an area due to a decrease in subsurface pressures). Some of the subsidence in the Antelope Valley is due to hydrocompaction, which is discussed under Geologic Hazards:

Hydrocompaction is a phenomenon most common in desert environments, but it has been noticed in such semi-arid regions as the Antelope Valley and upper Santa Clara Valley. It usually occurs when man first applies large amounts of water, causing certain opentextured soils to lose their strength and consolidate under their own weight. Hydrocompaction is a problem to the works of man because of the abruptness and short distances over which subsidence occurs...

The Public Safety Element of the 1975 Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan indicates that the Valley is generally free of brush-fire hazards, except for the hillside areas. The area north of the airport and east of Lancaster has been identified as the primary subsidence area in the Valley.

Water and Waste Management Element

The Water and Waste Management Element of the 1978 Preliminary Plan focuses on water distribution; flood protection; sewage collection and treatment; and disposal of industrial and solid wastes.

Some of the policies which are relevant to the CDCA are the following:

- •Encourage multiple use of water impoundment areas and drainage ways for public recreation consistent with the original purpose and maintenance of water quality....
- Require methods of flood control which avoid alteration of natural stream channels....
- ·Promote solid waste technology including source

reduction, to alleviate dependence upon sanitary landfills....

One of the <u>Recommended Actions</u> is: "Encourage Federal agencies to deny grants or projects that encourage urban development inconsistent with the General Plan."

Commentary

The Los Angeles County General Plan has been somewhat in limbo since 1975 when it was invalidated by the Superior Court of Los Angeles County. The major efforts to produce a new comprehensive general plan for the County as a whole and one for the Antelope Valley will benefit planning for the CDCA. It is therefore important that the CDCA planning program be closely coordinated with Los Angeles County planning efforts. Although commitment to the General Plan has not been strong, it is hoped that the adoption of a new Countywide Plan will increase public interest and commitment to comprehensive planning. Zoning consistency with the new General Plan will have to be improved.

Some of the expressed concerns about the future California Desert Plan revolve about flood plains management, trading of BLM lands, ORV activities, and the indirect effects that the Desert Plan may have on County planning. There is apparent support for improved coordination of County and Federal planning activities.

City of Lancaster

Introduction

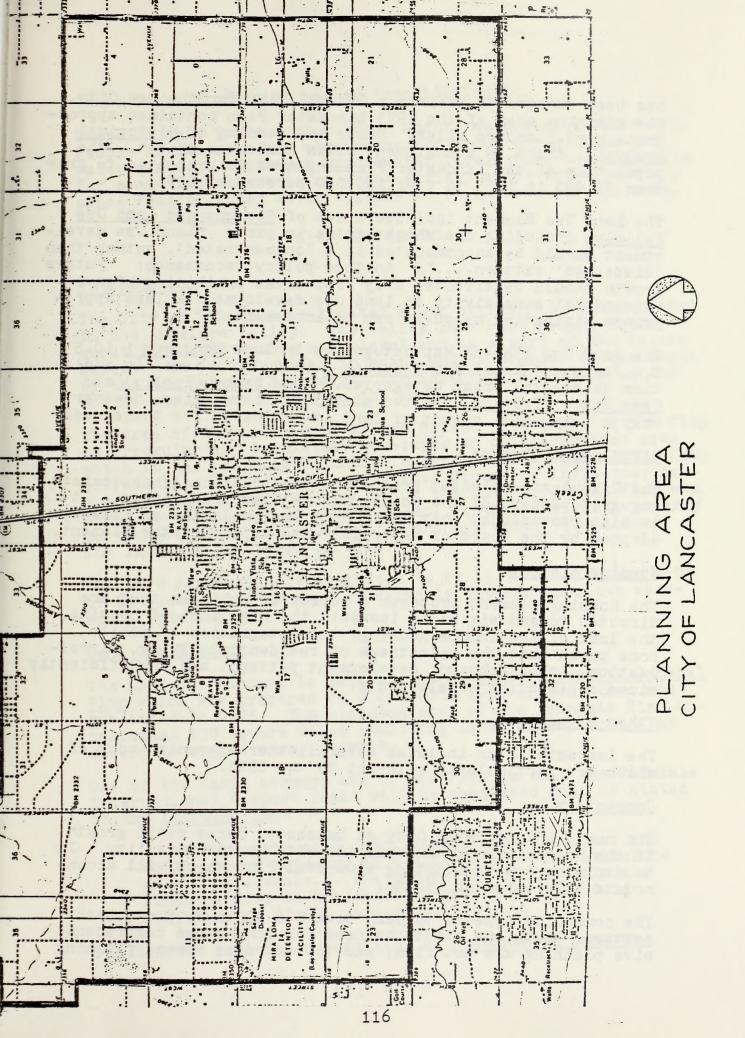
The City of Lancaster was incorporated on November 22, 1977. It is located in the Antelope Valley north of the City of Palmdale on flat terrain. The relative humidity is usually low, and the annual rainfall is under 9 inches.

The area of the City is 37 square miles, and the population is estimated to be between 58,000-59,000. The City to date does not have an adopted Sphere of Influence. There are no BLM lands within the City.

The economy is primarily based upon the aero-space industry.

Land Use Element

The City of Lancaster is presently using the Lancaster Community General Plan which was prepared as part of the North Los Angeles County General Plan by a consultant-government team and published on November 20, 1975. The Lancaster Plan is being used as an interim development guide; a consulting firm



has been engaged to prepare a General Plan for the new City. The planning area of the 1975 Lancaster Plan contained approximately 69.5 square miles. Under the heading of <u>Historical Analysis</u>, there is a statement which indicates that "...the population of the Lancaster Planning Area is projected to grow from 50,000 in 1975 to over 120,000 persons by 1995...".

The Land Use Element includes a set of Recommended Land Use Policies including one which states in part: "Land Use development should be accommodated in a 'concentrated', rather than 'dispersed' pattern...". Another policy recommends: "Future growth should be directed away from areas exhibiting high environmental sensitivity to land use development unless appropriate mitigating measures can be implemented."

The Land Use Element Map categories include Nonurban 1 (0.5 d.u./acre and less) and Nonurban 2 (1.0 d.u./acre) in addition to several urban categories. Open Space (Public) and Open Space (Private) are two additional categories; however, only a very small amount of land is indicated for these uses.

Circulation Element

The Circulation Element proposes a continuation of the existing grid pattern of the County Master Plan of Highways. It is also recommended that the County Regional Plan of Bikeways adopted by the Board of Supervisors be a part of the Element.

Housing Element

The Housing Element proposes a series of policies that are directed toward six major issues: the high cost of housing, the lack of low-income housing, the integration of mobile home parks into the mainstream of residential living, parcelization, "checkerboard" development pattern, and insufficiently sized residential developments.

Other Elements

The Lancaster Plan includes several other elements -- none of which are particularly relevant to the CDCA.

Commentary

The newly incorporated City of Lancaster faces rapid growth if the Palmdale International Airport becomes a reality. It is striving toward adopting a General Plan which will accommodate this expected growth.

The community appears to lean toward a strongly pro-growth posture. Opinions about the need for long-range comprehensive planning are not firm, and the approach toward planning

tends to be pragmatic, rather than idealistic.

There is said to be some concern about the desert environment. People in the area are also concerned about air quality and water quality. Although groundwater levels have been dropping for some time, there is no great anxiety about water quantity since Feather River water appears to be assured for the area.

City of Palmdale

Introduction

The City of Palmdale is located south of the City of Lancaster in the Antelope Valley. The Valley is a high desert basin about 2,500 feet above seal level and is a part of the Mojave Desert. It is triangular in shape and is bounded on the south by the San Gabriel Mountains, the Tehachapi Mountains on the north, and desert buttes on the east.

The area of the City is 66 square miles. The shape of the City is irregular and completely envelopes an unincorporated area which is the proposed Palmdale International Airport. The City of Palmdale does not have an adopted Sphere of Influence; however, the planning area upon which the City's General Plan was based covers about 130 square miles. Within the southwesterly portion of the planning area, there are about 790 acres of BLM lands in scattered parcels.

The 1978 population is estimated to be 13,000. Like the City of Lancaster, the economy of Palmdale depends upon the aerospace industry.

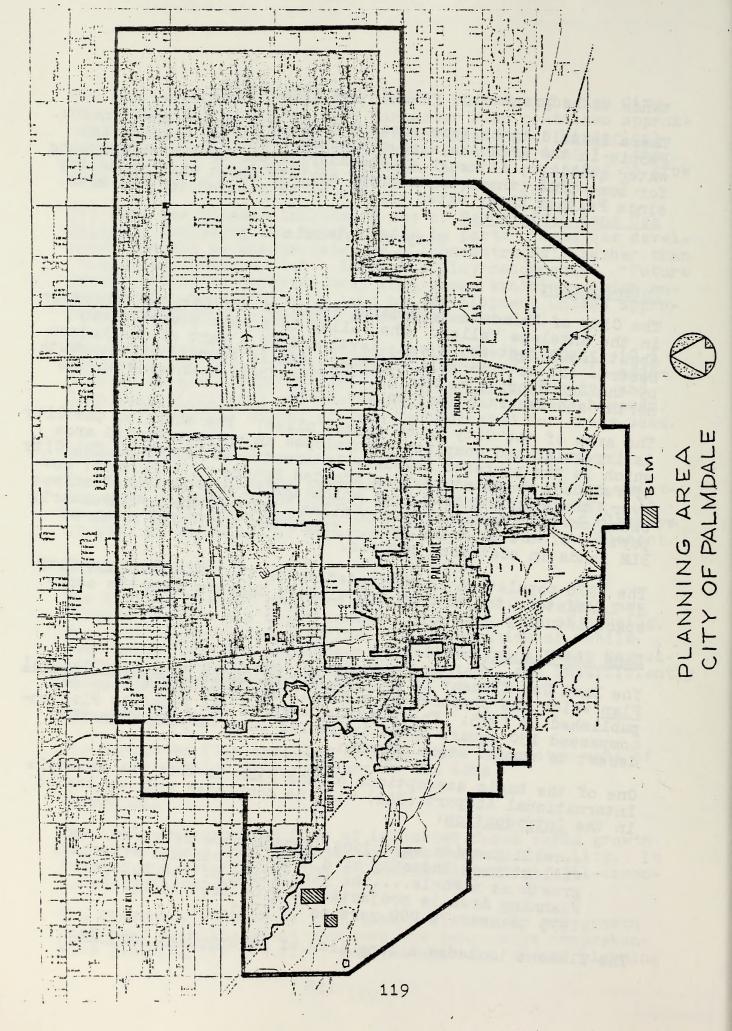
Land Use Element

The Land Use Element is part of the <u>Palmdale Community General</u> <u>Plan</u> which was prepared by a consultant-government team and published in 1975. The planning area of the Palmdale Plan encompassed 130 square miles including land varying from flat desert to rugged steep terrain.

One of the basic assumptions of the Plan is that the Palmdale International Airport (PAI) will be completed and, as stated in the <u>Introduction</u>:

...will provide more jobs, demand more services, and will attract industry of a high caliber and stimulate growth as a whole....the population of the Palmdale Planning Area is projected to grow from 23,700 in 1975 to over 70,000 persons by 1995....

The Element includes a long list of Recommended Land Use



<u>Policies</u>. A few of the policies which are relevant to planning for the CDCA are quoted here:

- 2.1 Population and land use growth should be accommodated in a "concentrated" rather than "dispersed" pattern....
- 3.2 Costs associated with the development of Palm-dale International Airport should be assumed principally by those who benefit (e.g., airlines, users, the immediate community, etc.)....
- 5.1 In areas deemed significantly hazardous to the health and welfare of the public, future land use development should be limited and controlled unless appropriate corrective measures can be implemented.
- 5.2 Areas of excessive slope (exceeding 30 percent) should be specifically designated as "Hillside Management Areas," with appropriate performance standards applied to development to minimize potential hazards.
- 5.3 Land uses should be regulated within floodways, or river channels and special standards of development applied in their surrounding floodplains, designating such areas as "Floodplains Management Areas". Specifically, Little Rock Creek, Amargosa Creek, and Anaverde Creek should be considered.
- 5.4 Areas contained within the Alquist-Priolo Seismic Special Studies zone should be designated as a "Seismic Safety Management Area," with appropriate standards of development to minimize potential hazards.
- 6.1 Disruption and degradation of the environment should be minimized as land use development occurs. Land uses should be integrated so that they are compatible with natural environmental systems.
 - 6.2 Significant plant and wildlife habitats in the Palmdale planning area should be designated as "Habitat Management Areas," and appropriate measures prescribed for their maintenance. Such areas should include the dense stands of Joshua Trees in the Little Rock Creek and Ritter Ridge.

The Land Use categories include <u>Open Space</u> and <u>Special Management Areas</u>. The latter category includes <u>Hillside Management Areas</u> (where average slope exceeds 30 percent); <u>Floodplains Management Areas</u> (within the floodway, or watercourse itself,

only certain extractive industrial—such as sand and gravel—agriculture, open space, light recreational, and groundwater recharge should be allowed); Habitat Management Areas (significant plant and wildlife habitats); Noise Impact Management Areas (any area within projected annual CNEL contours of 60 to 65 dB); and Seismic Safety Management Areas (Alquist-Priolo Seismic Special Studies zones).

The Land Use Element includes "standards of flexibility". As stated in the text: "In many instances, it is not crucial to the successful implementation of the policies of the Plan that certain uses be restricted to the precise boundaries indicated ...". For example, Residential categories would have a flexibility factor of 150 feet with certain provisions, but Industrial categories would have no flexibility.

Another interesting feature of the Element is that it represents a population capacity of "...approximately 1.6 to 2.7 times that projected....thus providing flexibility in the local land market."

Community Design Element

The Community Design Element under <u>Issues</u> presents an interesting statement about Palmdale:

Currently, the Palmdale planning area can be characterized as a wide scattering of residential tracts, small commercial centers, strip commercial and industry, with no identifiable pattern, focus, or goal, accompanied by a total lack of "sense of place". At first glance, this may be a somewhat harsh representation of the community. However, comments of residents and visitors to the area, driving and walking throughout the area, and observation of aerial photographs tend to confirm the description. A member of the Palmdale Citizen's Planning Council stated that "I would not be proud to bring an outsider into my community".

Four of the Policies of the Element are important to the CDCA:

- 2.1 Physical land use development should be carefully integrated into the natural environmental setting (e.g., hillside development should respect natural contours, rather than utilizing massive grading to reshape the site)....
- 2.3 Open land should be used to identify community boundaries in order to differentiate between communities and strengthen community identity and character.

- 2.4 The pattern of open areas for each rural community should promote and enhance a rural community character....
- 3.12 Usable open space in mountain residential areas should be preserved through planned residential development and clustering.

Environmental Resources Management Element

The Environmental Resources Management Element includes Conservation, Open Space, Recreation, Scenic Highways, and Air Pollution. There are four major areas within the Element:

Natural Resources, Managed Resources Production, Natural Hazards, and Outdoor Recreation. The Policies that relate to the major areas are:

- 1. Although Joshua Trees seem to be in abundance in Palmdale, they are actually few in number and need to be preserved to the maximum extent possible. It is recommended that they be included within a "habitat management zone" and the "floodplain management area" of Little Rock Creek wash.
- 2. Little Rock Creek wash area is the major ground-water recharge area for the Antelope Valley, and contains important dry wash and desert woodland habitats. The Little Rock Creek floodway and flood-plain should be managed with special consideration to these factors. It is recommended that disruption of the terrain and natural cover in this area be minimized, and that residential uses not be permitted.
- 3. Ambient Air Quality Standards are related to the conservation of natural resources. The Plan recommends a concentrated growth which reduces vehicle trip miles between home to work and shopping, and thereby creating less pollution than would be the case with a dispersed development pattern.
- 4. The flooding problem must be mitigated to ensure future development in those areas subject to flooding. It is recommended that a series of flood control channels be built to collect and carry off the runoff through the Palmdale Planning Area. These flood control channels would continue north to mitigate the flood problems in the Lancaster area and empty into the Rosamond Dry Lake in Kern County or retention basins.

Noise Element

The Noise Element refers to major generators of noise in the

Palmdale Planning Area: The Palmdale International Airport, The Southern Pacific Railroad, and the Antelope Valley Freeway. PIA is the most serious of these generators.

One of the policies of the Element is the following:

It is recommended that within the noise contour of 65 to 75 dB CNEL industrial including warehousing, agriculture, and non-noise sensitive commercial be permitted and that all new construction for residential, schools, libraries, churches, health facilities, public meeting places and noise sensitive commercial be prohibited.

Seismic Safety Element

The Seismic Safety Element refers to the San Andreas Fault, which lies immediately to the southwest of the City of Palmdale, as "...one of the world's major fault zones..." Discussion of this seismic hazard continues with the following statement:

Since the San Andreas Fault zone is so close to Palmdale, questions are raised as to the risks involved in new construction and whether it is appropriate to consider modifications to existing structures to prevent as much as possible property damage and loss of life....

Several policies and programs are recommended to promote seismic safety in the Planning Area.

Public Safety Element

The introductory remarks of the Public Safety Element include this statement:

...At present the major threats in Palmdale include fire and non-seismic geological hazards. Fire hazards arise from flammable brush--chaparral and grasses--and urban dangers derived from structural conditions, carelessness or vandalism. In Palmdale the non-seismic geological hazards include unstable slopes--sliding and erosion--and other soil-related dangers to structures.

The Element presents several <u>Issues</u>—-two of which are quoted here:

4. Expansion of development into brush-covered areas which requires clearance measures.

5. Expansion of development into areas of unstable slopes which require remedial measures to prevent sliding and erosion.

The two <u>Policies</u> that respond to the above-mentioned issues are:

- 4. Expansion of development into brush areas shall be conditioned on a satisfactory commitment to clearance and landscaping with non-flammable plants.
- 5. Expansion of development into areas of unstable slopes shall be limited by density, development standards and other appropriate measures to reduce risk to an acceptable level....

Energy Conservation Element

In the introductory section of the Energy Conservation Element, there is this statement: "Energy for space heating, cooling and water heating appears to follow Antelope Valley patterns; that is, 50 to 70 percent higher than the Los Angeles Basin requirements...."

Two of the Policies have relevance to the CDCA:

- 1. The impact upon travel distances to work, shopping, school, etc., shall be examined for all projects and plans. Dispersal of housing without provision for other day-to-day needs shall be discouraged. Bicycling and walking to and from activity centers shall be encouraged....
- 3. The very large numbers of new structures required in the future shall be regarded as an unprecedented opportunity in making Palmdale an energy-efficient city.

Commentary

The future of the City of Palmdale is closely related to the development of the Antelope Valley. The establishment of Edwards Air Force Base marked the beginning of a dramatic change in the economy of the Valley. The aerospace industry has taken a firm grasp on the Valley economy and has produced large waves of land speculation in anticipation of future urban development. The prospect of a major international airport in the Valley has sparked another land boom. The challenge to planning for the City of Palmdale will be to accommodate urban growth while minimizing adverse effects upon the environment of the area.

Zoning is said to be consistent with the General Plan, except in minor cases. There is need to update the Seismic Safety and Noise Elements. Current problems relate to hillside development, flood control, and local storm drainage.

Allegedly, there is firm commitment to the General Plan, perhaps because there was much public participation in its preparation. The community has a pro-growth orientation.

Concerns in regard to the evolving California Desert Plan include sludge disposal in the Desert, the Elks Hill pipeline, and scenic values to some extent. Anxieties about energy siting, transmission lines, and ORV activity are not apparent.

Kern County

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on June 18, 1973. The Element superseded all previously adopted Land Use Elements for the unincorporated areas of Kern County.

The Element includes several <u>Assumptions</u> regarding the future of Kern County, among which are these three:

- •The average farm unit will continue to increase in size, and the farm population, as a percentage of the total County population, will continue to decline:
- •That environmental considerations mandated to land use activities will become increasingly more important in the future...
- •That land use decisions will remain at local government level.

Several <u>Land Use Problems</u> are also presented. Three of them are noteworthy:

- 3. <u>Promotional "communities"</u>. (The premature or unnecessary development of thousands of acres for lot sale purposes in rural areas of the County.)...
- 5. Environmentally damaging development. (The continued establishment of land use activities and "improvements" irrespective of the natural and social environmental capabilities and limitations.)
- 6. Loss of natural environment. (The sacrifice of scenic amenities, wildlife habitat, and other natural resources without regard for future generations.)...

A large array of land use designations are displayed on the Land Use Element Map. In addition to numerous urban designations, there are several non-urban designations that are pertinent to the California Desert Study; they will be briefly discussed here. First, it should be noted that the word principle is used in the text of the Kern County Land Use Element in much the same sense that the word policy is used in other local land use elements reviewed in this report.

<u>Urban Expansion</u> is intended for "...areas of transition from predominately rural land use to urban type uses." The text suggests, however, that expansion into these reserve areas should not occur until absolutely necessary. One of the <u>Principles</u> stated is: "That urban development within urban expansion areas occurs only as a logical extension of urban centers."

Rural Residential is intended for very low density residential purposes and agricultural activities. It is to be applied "...where the open characteristics of the area should be maintained, where services are minimal, and where land holdings tend to be for speculative purposes." (underlining added). Minimum parcel sizes should be from $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres to 20 acres, depending on "area and natural capabilities." One of the Principles is: "That development be oriented to the natural capabilities, limitations, and terrain of the area."

Natural Resource is for areas having known mineral deposits (productive or potentially productive) which should be protected for future use. The designation "...is not intended to be a license to abuse both the natural and man-made environment." Three of the six Principles are quoted here:

- •That extraction and processing operations not be detrimental to the use capability of surrounding properties or adjacent land use designations because of noise, odor, dust, vibration, or related hazards and inconveniences.
- •That aesthetic values be protected in established scenic areas.
- •That the natural landscape be rehabilitated where feasible after mineral production and extraction has ceased....

Intensive Agriculture is intended for areas "...characterized by the use of applied water to produce a commercial crop."

About 24 percent of the County land area is so designated—most of it within the San Joaquin Valley. Three of the four Principles are:

·That productive, and potentially productive intensive

agricultural areas be protected from urban growth and incompatible development.

- 'That the number of projected major and secondary highways through restricted agricultural areas be reduced to only those necessary for adequate circulation with locations defined....
- •That intensive agriculture use be recognized as a highest and best use.

The minimum parcel size should be 20 acres.

Extensive Agriculture is for application to areas with "... those agricultural uses involving large amounts of land with low value-per-acre yields such as livestock grazing and dry-land farming. Irrigated crops and orchards are not considered extensive agricultural uses." Approximately 26 percent of the total County area is designated for Extensive Agriculture. Three of the Principles are:

- •That the grazing of livestock and the retention of natural range land be promoted to protect open space and serve as an important segment of the agricultural industry....
- ·That scenic qualities be preserved and protected....
- •That property ownerships remain large with restrictions to prevent the creation of smaller parcels.

The minimum parcel size should be 20 acres.

Recreational Land is intended for areas primarily under the ownership of the State and Federal governments. Those lands --which are principally within the mountain and desert regions of the County--involve about 17 percent of the total County area. Four of the seven Principles are:

- ·That all endangered wildlife and plant species be protected from detrimental uses and encroachments....
- •That off-road vehicle use be directed to areas that are the least disrupted by such activity.
- ·That natural scenic qualities be protected....
- •That acquisition or exchange programs directed towards eliminating privately owned enclaves within public land blocks be encouraged at all governmental levels.

The parcel size should be variable, depending on land capability, terrain, and amenities; the minimum to be $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres.

Special Use is a designation for "...large landholdings under public or semi-public ownership used for miscellaneous activities." Included are uses such as water spreading areas and large County airports.

Military is intended for the two large military establishments within the County: Edwards Air Force Base and the China Lake Naval Weapons Center which have a combined area of 283,000 acres within Kern County.

Flood Plains is the designation for areas within lines indicating the general boundaries of potential flood hazards (100 year flood). Uses and activities that could be adversely affected by flood conditions or obstruct the natural flow within the floodway will be restricted. One of the Principles is: "That unwarranted and unwise development be diverted away from flood prone areas."

Circulation Element

The Circulation Element was adopted on July 3, 1967. The Circulation Element Map indicates locations of State freeways and expressways, other State Highways, major County highways, State scenic highways, railroads, County airports, and military airfields. A note on the Map provides for additional highways not shown on the Map itself:

In addition to the routes indicated on this map, the following widths are hereby established.

For routes along section lines (major highways)

110 feet.

For routes along mid-section lines (secondary highways) 90 feet.

These routes are to be opened or widened as development occurs.

Housing Element

The Housing Element was adopted on May 1, 1972. One of the Standards is: "c. Environmental standards should be consistent with environmental goals. Environmental conditions shall not be allowed to vary in such a manner so as to detract from total housing environment to encourage deterioration of neighborhoods and dwellings."

Under <u>Projection of Future Housing Needs</u>, the 1990 population for the total County is projected at 404,000 persons, and the projection for additional dwelling units by 1990 is 53,270.

Under <u>Housing Analysis</u>, some of the conditions which were found to exist are that both rental and sales housing are in short supply; that cost of standard housing is high in relation to income of certain groups; that a significant portion of the permanent and migrant work force needing housing are employed in seasonal agriculture and services; and that there is very little sound housing available in the price range that can be afforded by low and moderate income families.

Open Space and Conservation Element

On June 26, 1972, the Board of Supervisors adopted an Open Space and Conservation Element. Open space land is described in the <u>Foreward</u> of the Element as:

...land which is utilized, or has potential, for the production of food and fiber; land utilized, needed, or having a potential for passive and/or active recreation use; land having aesthetic qualities and unique scenic values; and land containing, supporting, or producing one or more depletable natural resources.

The natural resources discussed in the Element are: (1) botanic communities; (2) wildlife habitats; (3) mineral resources; (4) soils; (5) forests; and (6) water and its related functions.

The broad categories of open space and conservation used in the text of the Element are: Agricultural Land, Natural Resource Land, Scenic Land, and Recreational Land. In order to achieve the Objectives for each of these categories, a series of Guidelines are presented in the Implementation Program of the Element. Only those Guidelines which are relevant to the CDCA within Kern County are quoted in the following discussion.

- 2. That productive, and potentially productive, agricultural areas be protected from urban growth and premature development.
- 3. That the number of projected public major and secondary highways through highly restricted agricultural areas be reduced to only those necessary for adequate circulation with locations defined....

These are some of the relevant <u>Guidelines</u> for <u>Natural Resource</u> <u>Land</u>:

Wildlife Habitat

1. Restrict land use activities in important wildlife habitat areas to that which is tolerable by the wildlife inhabitants.

- 2. Provide for the inclusion of identified areas containing unique plant life into specific land conservation programs by all governmental agencies.
- 3. Control the off-road vehicle use in identified unique plant life areas.

Mineral Resources

- 1. Regulate use of identified mineral lands to uses which will not restrict or deter potential production....
- 3. Institute mandatory regulatory measures to protect the environment and surrounding land uses from possible pollution by noise, dust, smoke, and water contamination.
- 4. Require, where feasible, rehabilation of the natural landscape after mineral production and extraction has ceased.

Soils

- 1. Restrict intensive agricultural land conservation programs ultimately to lands having soils capable of supporting economic intensive agricultural activities.
- 2. Protect steep and erosive soils from unnecessary development.

Water Resources

- 1. Promote intensive agricultural activities on the best soils where maximum production of agricultural products can occur. This will allow higher agricultural production for water utilized.
- 2. Protect valuable watershed areas from adverse development which would reduce the effectiveness of water retention and release.

Some of the <u>Guidelines</u> for <u>Scenic Lands</u> are:

- 3. That development standards be established that would assure compatible development in areas having high scenic value.
- 4. That historic structures be retained in scenic

areas to compliment a scenic highway system.

The pertinent Guidelines for Recreational Land are:

- 2. Encourage Federal, State, and local agencies to acquire, preserve, and develop recreational resources and historic and scenic land in accordance with the County Plan.
- 3. Encourage private individuals and organizations to preserve and appropriately develop recreational, historic, and scenic lands in accordance with the general plan....
- 5. Encourage an overall beautification program:
 - a. To eliminate littering of our highways, parks, and open space areas.
 - b. To enhance the natural environmental conditions and to provide shelter from the natural elements where needed in recreational areas.
- 6. Regulate the use of recreational lands to protect the land from over use and abuse.

Scenic Highways Element

The Scenic Highways Element was adopted on August 5, 1974. The purpose of the Element is revealed in the <u>Introduction</u>:

From a recreational and environmental standpoint, it is important that scenic areas be preserved. These and other attractions along our roadways should not only be protected for us, but also for future generations, who will undoubtedly place a great deal of value on such a legacy as scenic land.

The Element includes five <u>Goals</u> which "...relate to the overall end results desired of the Scenic Highways Program." They are:

- 1. Enhance the quality of life.
- 2. Encourage the proper respect for the natural environment.
- 3. Safeguard property values.
- 4. Stimulate the local economy.
- 5. Preserve and improve the present image of the County.

The Element includes an interesting chapter on <u>Possible Issues</u> and Conflicts. Included is a discussion of <u>Conservationists</u> <u>Versus Developers--part</u> of which is quoted here:

Government officials often find themselves caught in the middle between conservationists and developers. The more outspoken conservationists occasionally accuse the county of siding with development interests. Conservationists claim to be the spokesmen for the natural environment, and their interest often transcends a political role. For example, one conservation group in Kern County has actually purchased land in order that it may be preserved as open space. While the conservationist-developer conflict cannot be reconciled, steps should be taken to involve all interest groups at an early stage in the planning process.

Another conflict presented is that of <u>Government Versus Government</u> which may be relevant to the CDCA planning program:

Some conflicts are present within the government. Since many government agencies reflect the interests of their constituencies, it is inevitable that scenic corridor preservation conflicts on the "outside" will be reflected in inter-agency disputes. Differences of opinion over open space policy and control are evident among federal, state, and local agencies. In addition, various county departments may be in disagreement over scenic highway and open space issues.

Differences among government agencies should be reconciled whenever possible by clear governmental policy on basic issues.

In that portion of the CDCA which is within Kern County, there are three segments of State highways eligible for official scenic highway designation. They are: the segment of Highway 395 from the Inyo County line to State Route 14; State Route 14 from its junction with Highway 395 to the town of Mojave; and State Route 58 from Mojave to the San Bernardino County line. The proposed Kern County Scenic Highways within the CDCA are State Route 58 leading northwesterly from Mojave and Highway 178 leading northwesterly from State Highway 14 at Freeman Junction.

Noise Element

The Board of Supervisors adopted the Noise Element on June 2, 1975. In the <u>Introduction</u> of the Element, there is this statement:

Because of its rural character, much of Kern County does not now have a serious noise pollution problem. However, as the county continues to grow and previously undeveloped areas are built up, the noise levels will continually increase....

The briefly stated Policies of the Element are quoted here:

- ·Utilize good land use planning principles to reduce conflicts related to noise emissions
- ·Maintain stringent controls over construction and other temporary noise sources
- Require reductions in noise from existing sources wherever possible
- ·Employ the best available methods of noise control

Safety and Seismic Safety Element

The Safety and Seismic Safety Element was adopted on January 5, 1976. One of the objectives listed under <u>Purpose</u> is: "To reduce economic and social disruption resulting from earthquakes, fire, flooding, and other geologic hazards by assuring the continuity of vital services and functions."

One of the <u>Assumptions</u> may have some relevance to the California Desert Study: "The regulation of land uses will remain under local supervision, legislation, and enforcement, although certain federal and state policies and programs may require compliance."

One of the Policy Statements is pertinent to the Desert Study:

Abandoned Open Mine Shafts and Wells

That the county seek methods to eliminate hazards of abandoned open mine shafts and open wells pursuant to Section 24400 et seq. of the California Health and Safety Code. Any such program should be coordinated with involved state and federal agencies.

A Seismic Hazard Atlas Map shows earthquake epicenters and selected faults. It indicates that the CDCA portion of the County is less directly affected by seismic activity than the central area of the County. The Safety Element Map of Kern County Drainage Areas indicates the general direction of possible major flood waters. It is interesting to note that, within the CDCA, major flood waters are indicated flowing to China Lake, Koehn Lake, Rosamond Lake, and Rogers Lake.

Commentary

All nine of the State-mandated elements are included in the Kern County General Plan. An interview with County planning officials revealed that the County is being challenged in court on the basis of lack of consistency of the zoning ordinance with the General Plan. A County planning program is presently underway to revise certain elements of the Plan.

The annual rate of growth is presently about one percent in the County. There is no discernible movement in the direction of growth control or growth management. Population changes are occurring due to movement of persons or families within the County.

Concerns about the California Desert Plan appear to be limited to the matter of private land holdings in BLM "checkerboard" areas. There is some apprehension about the possibility of Federal domination of land use planning in areas where there are large Federal land holdings. Local planning officials see a critical need for coordination of planning efforts by all levels of government.

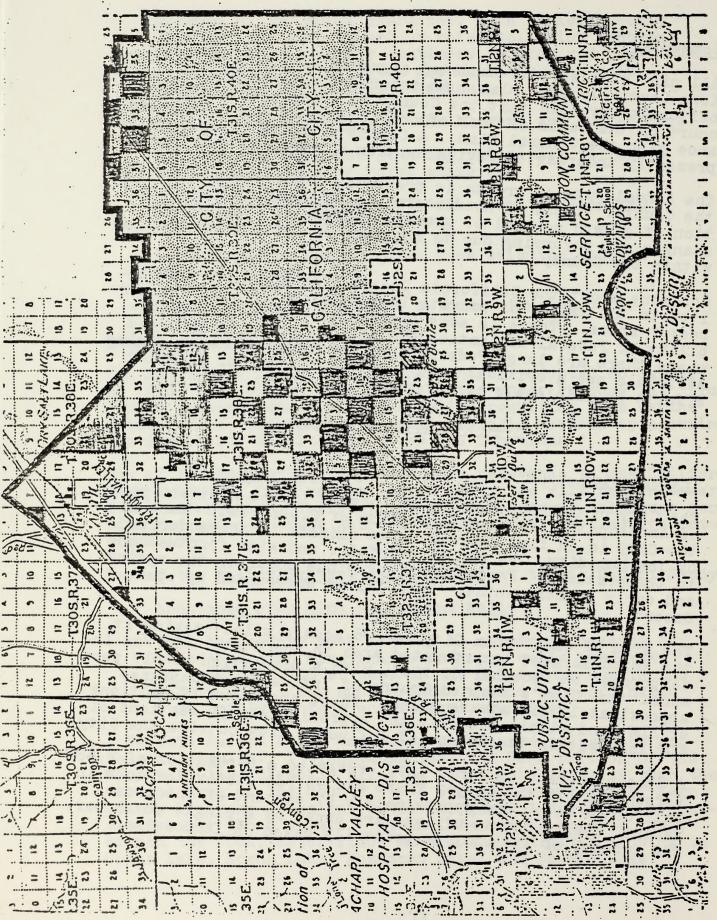
City of California City

Introduction

The City of California City is located in the northern part of Antelope Valley at an elevation of 2,400 feet. Much of the City is in flat terrain. The climate is characterized by low humidity, low annual rainfall, and wide fluctuations in temperatures. Frequent strong winds occur in the spring and early summer months. The City is surrounded by open desert.

The area of California City is 186 square miles--making it the third largest incorporated area in the State. It was incorporated on December 8, 1965, with a population of 617 persons. The City's adopted Sphere of Influence encompasses approximately 515 square miles. There are about 12 sections of BLM land within the City and approximately 51 sections of BLM land within the Sphere of Influence area outside the City.

A Special Census in June, 1977, revealed a population of 2,484 persons within the City. There are 45,780 subdivided lots in California City, and approximately 97 percent of these are vacant. Large blocks of land are owned by a single developer. The economy of the City is primarily based on land sales.





Land Use Element

The Land Use Element is a part of the <u>California City General Plan: 1978-1990</u> which was prepared by a consulting firm and adopted by the City Council on January 10, 1978. Based upon various assumptions, the <u>Five Population Scenarios</u> in the Element range from 4,500 to 20,640 by 1990. Resident attitudes are said to be "general optimism and pro-growth".

The section of the Element on <u>Goals and Objectives</u> includes these three <u>Objectives</u> relevant to the CDCA:

Create incentive programs to encourage in-fill and explore future practicable restrictions which discourage unmanageable dispersion...

•Encourage preservation of parts of California City for agricultural and semi-agricultural uses utilizing the latest conservation provisions....

Provide incentives for integrating the planning function with the development of large parcels and incentives for parcel aggregation...

Agressively promote California City's recreational activities....

Two of the relevant policies are under Transit:

Policy 39: Reduced travel time should be encouraged by concentrating facilities and increased densities, thus minimizing outward expansion.

Policy 40: Adequate transportation systems should be provided as demand occurs and not utilized as a stimulus for dispersion.

One of the categories used on the Land Use Map is <u>Controlled</u> <u>Development</u>. Part of the explanation of this category is quoted here:

... The Controlled Development category provides for large lot subdivisions, open space uses, agricultural and horticultural uses, and very low density residential uses (1 dwelling unit per 20 acres) to be developed on an interim basis....

All land areas beyond the City limits but within the City's Sphere of Influence are designated Controlled Development Category 11. Higher intensity development within these areas is subject to the provision of detailed plans as previously discussed.

Three other categories which are pertinent to the CDCA are Conservation Land, Natural Resource Land, and Tortoise Preserve. Conservation Land is described in the text of the Element as that which:

...includes flood plain areas and/or flood control improvements, and major land forms or mountainous areas which exist in various locations throughout the Community. It is intended that development in these areas serve to protect such features for open space and recreational uses....

Natural Resource Land is intended for properties owned by the Bureau of Land Management, and <u>Tortoise Preserve</u> is intended for the approximately 30 square miles set aside for desert tortoise habitat.

The Element also includes a section entitled <u>Sphere of Influence</u>. Part of the discussion under that heading is quoted here:

California City's first incorporated area included approximately 161 square miles. There have been two subsequent annexations of approximately 2 and 23 square miles respectively. Further annexations have been discussed as being in the City's best interests. There are at least three areas of concern:

- ·California City's present boundaries are in some areas too irregular for good planning.
- •The limits of incorporation go around prominent mountain shapes, thus leaving them beyond the control of future city ordinances for mountain preservation.
- ·Long stretches of roads leading into California City are beyond the city limits and are thus not subject to the protection of future sign ordinances.
- Based on the LAFCO procedures and the language of the Knox-Nisbet Act, it is unlikely that California City could be successful at the present time in any attempts to extend its boundaries. It is therefore imperative that the City work with the County to achieve protection against the potential of scarred hillsides, entrance roads lined with offending signs, and peripheral development which compromises California City's General Plan.

Circulation Element

The Circulation Element is part of the adopted General Plan which was adopted on January 10, 1978. In addition to the categories of Major Arterials, Minor Arterials, and Collector Streets, there is one called Reserve Corridors which is explained in the text:

These are transportation routes which will be analyzed from time to time and utilized when demanded by the need. There are presently no freeways or expressways in California City and no determination is made at this time as to whether the reserve corridors will be for freeways or some other element in the transportation network. The provisions are far in excess of any present planning and are included based on the potential magnitude of the City. No development may occur within the reserve corridors other than streets or path systems which either follow or cross the corridor alignment.

Housing Element

The Housing Element was adopted in August, 1972. It was prepared by the planning consulting firm that prepared the Kern County Housing Element.

The Element reveals that housing conditions are good, with only 3 percent of the units rated as deteriorating and only .2 percent rated as substandard. Like many cities in the State, California City lacks housing for low and moderate income families. Based upon a projected population of 10,000 persons by 1990, California City would need a total of 3,329 housing units to house the 1990 population.

Open Space Element

The Open Space Element, which was prepared by the staff of the Kern County Council of Governments, was adopted by the City Council on June 18, 1973.

A good summary of the Element is presented in the Abstract:

It identifies general goals, standards, policies, and outlines a course of action so that open-space will be available for the citizens of the community. Emphasis is placed on utilization of all community resources, both public and private, for recreational purposes. It discourages the premature and unnecessary conversion of open-space land to urban uses as a matter of public interest and benefits the urban dwellers because it discourages noncontiguous

development patterns, which unnecessarily increases the cost of community services to the residents.

In the section on Open-Space Resources, a policy is presented for <u>Agricultural Land</u>--part of which is quoted here:

Prime agricultural and specialty crop lands are preserved within the city....Such land must be permanently and exclusively reserved and agriculture recognized as its highest use in both public and private interests. Urban development must be diverted away from prime lands. Land taxes on reserved prime land should be based on their agricultural values and not on their value as potential subdivision land.

Conservation Element

The Conservation Element was also prepared by the staff of Kern County Council of Governments and was adopted on June 18, 1973. The Abstract in the beginning of the report summarizes the Element:

This report is concerned with the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources. It includes plans for water, hydraulic forces of water, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, fisheries, wildlife, minerals and other natural resources. The sections dealing with water were developed in coordination with the Kern County Water Agency and all district agencies which have developed, served, controlled or conserved water for any purpose.

The plan identifies general goals and policies, and outlines a course of action for implementing the plan.

The Element includes a map of Kern County which indicates Land Division Activity by Section: Percent of Section in Small Parcels (20 AC. or Less). It is interesting to note that the greatest intensity of land division activity in Kern County has occurred in the general vicinity of California City.

Water is of importance to the future of California City. In the discussion of <u>Water</u> under <u>Conservation Resources</u>, these three goals are presented:

- 1. It is the goal of the city to conduct an adequate conservation program to insure a supply and quality of water to meet the present and future needs.
- 2. To obtain maximum benefit from limited imported

water resources.

3. To utilize water for the highest beneficial use possible.

Wildlife is also a concern of the Element. Three of the policies presented under Wildlife have relevance to the CDCA:

- 1. The preservation of all species of animals is deemed essential to the citizens of the city. Public and private owners of wildlife habitat are encouraged to operate these areas in a manner that reflects good management principles and conserves the habitat....
- 4. Land use activities in important wildlife habitat areas should be restricted to that which is tolerable by the wildlife inhabitants.
- 5. The establishment of wildlife preserves in areas containing rare or endangered wildlife species should be encouraged....

One of the appendices of the Element is entitled <u>Education for Natural Resource Conservation</u>. Part of the discussion under that heading is quoted here:

In the past, appreciation of the role our natural resources played in our countries development has been neglected in most school programs. It has been widely assumed that the home and community agencies would provide the opportunities for individuals to acquire knowledge of conservation principles and an appreciation of our natural resources. But with the shift and increase of population and the changing patterns of work and leisure, it has now become apparent that children need to be taught the importance of conserving our natural resources in order to prevent waste and destruction of these elements.

Scenic Highways Element

The Scenic Highways Element was adopted on January 14, 1975. It, too, was prepared by the staff of the Kern County COG. The Goal of the Element is:

To designate certain portions of the road system which represent an accomplishment of special significance as a scenic highway, to protect and enhance the city's attractive and existing scenic beauty.

The Element proposes that Twenty Mule Team Parkway become a scenic highway route. The Parkway begins at the Randsburg-Mojave Road within the City and proceeds in a northeasterly direction to Highway 395. It parallels the original Twenty Mule Team Trail that originated in Death Valley and terminated in Mojave, California.

Noise Element

The Noise Element is another element which was prepared for the City by the Kern County COG. It was adopted on May 27, 1975.

One of the Policies presented is:

1. The city shall maintain and gradually improve upon the noise environment within its jurisdiction. Where present noise levels are unacceptable, the city shall cause them to be reduced to appropriate levels....

In the chapter on <u>Implementation</u>, part of one of the actions recommended is:

C. Coordinate the city's noise control program with that of other incorporated cities and the County of Kern: Noise does not stop at the boundary lines between jurisdictions. To achieve complete control of community noise, the county and cities must work together....

Seismic Safety Element

Another element which was prepared for the City by the Kern County COG is the Seismic Safety Element-it was adopted on January 14, 1975.

Under <u>Natural Seismic Hazards</u>, the Element points out that California City is near the Garlock Fault and thus:

...may be subjected to severe ground shaking when elastic strains accumulated within the earth are suddenly released along the Garlock or other major faults. The Garlock is considered active because in this area it displaces quaternary sediments.

No landslides are identified within the City "...however, on the slopes, mud flow and soil creep may be precipitated by flash floods during years of high rainfall....".

Safety Element

The Safety Element was adopted on November 25, 1975. It, too,

was prepared by the staff of the Kern County COG. As stated in the Abstract, the Element:

...is an emergency plan for the protection of the city from fires and geologic hazards. It includes procedures to be followed in the event of a disaster likely to arrive with little warning, having a rapid development and having a potential for substantial destruction. Considered are such features as 1) evacuation and access routes, 2) peak load water supply requirements, 3) minimum road width, 4) clearance around structures, and 5) geological hazard mapping in areas of known geologic hazards....

One of the policies listed under <u>Objectives</u>, <u>General Policies</u> is: "Plan land uses so areas of natural hazards are not developed with high population densities."

Water/Sewer Element

The Water/Sewer Element and Program was prepared by a consulting firm and was adopted by the City Council in August, 1972. It is concerned with water supply, wastewater disposal, and storm drainage for California City. The target date for the Element is 1980.

In the discussion under <u>Water Supply</u>, the Element indicates that "...water consumption in California City is unusually high and has been increasing rapidly over the past few years." The City uses well water as its source of domestic water. Future development "...may require importation of water...". In regard to sewerage, the discussion under <u>Wastewater System</u> indicates that many of the present dwelling units are without sewer service: "Because of this and the expected population increase...the collection system and treatment facility will require expansion...".

In the discussion of <u>Storm Drainage Facilities</u>, the Element has this to say: "The projected growth for California City will necessitate the construction of additional drainage channels to convey the storm water runoff through the newly developed areas...".

Commentary

The present General Plan of California City reflects some lowering of expectations. In 1958, when a land sales program was launched in the area, the promoters had lofty goals for a cluster of new cities. The nation-wide sales campaign has resulted in a small settlement of dispersed homes and enough vacant lots to house a population of more than 100,000 people. Today, the General Plan: 1978-1990 assumes for planning purposes that the population of California City will be less than 10,000 by 1990. The City's General Plan with its various elements has been kept up to date and reflects community understanding of the need for long-range comprehensive planning.

The City appears to have a reasonable rate of growth, although there are some problems in regard to lack of sewers and sewage treatment capacity. Zoning consistency with the General Plan is yet to be attained. Residents of the community are not opposed to growth.

Community awareness of the California Desert planning program is said to be generally lacking. Concerns about the environment relate to air quality, water quality, quietness, and scenic values. Low-density living and absence of congestion are prized by most of the residents.

The significant amounts of BLM land within the City and within the City's Sphere of Influence indicate a need for careful coordination of planning efforts.

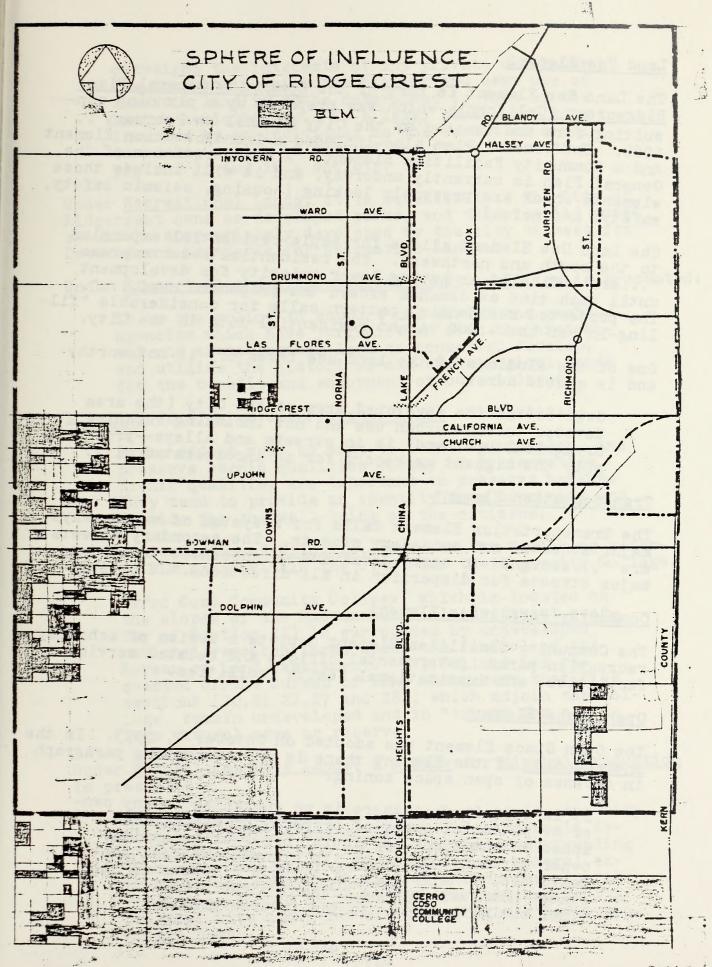
City of Ridgecrest

Introduction

The City of Ridgecrest is located within the Indian Wells Valley area in the northeast corner of Kern County. It is immediately south and west of the U.S. Naval Ordnance Test Station at China Lake. The elevation is about 2,300 feet, the El Paso Mountains lie to the south, the Argus Range is to the east, and the Sierra Nevada is to the west. The average annual rainfall is approximately $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

The area of the City is about $12\frac{1}{2}$ square miles, and the area of the City's adopted Sphere of Influence is more than 30 square miles. There are about fourteen $2\frac{1}{2}$ acre parcels of BLM land within the City in Section 32 and almost two square miles of BLM land outside the City limits but within the originally adopted Sphere of Influence. Because the City boundaries were extended for a considerable distance to the south by annexation some time after the adoption of the City's Sphere of Influence, the official boundaries of the Sphere will probably be changed accordingly. There are several square miles of BLM land within and around the southerly portion of the City in the general vicinity of Cerro Coso Community College.

The present population is estimated to be about 15,000. The economy is largely dependent upon the U.S. Naval Ordnance Test Station.



Land Use Element

The Land Use Element is part of the <u>Community General Plan:</u> Ridgecrest, <u>California</u> which was prepared by a planning consulting firm and adopted by the City Council on February 1, 1968. The General Plan also included a Transportation Element and a Community Facilities Element. A major revision of the General Plan is currently underway, and it will include those elements which are presently lacking (housing, seismic safety, safety, and noise).

The Land Use Element allows for ample residential expansion to the south and northwest. The residential reserve areas "...are indicated as having lower priority for development until such time as demands exceed the projected need...".

The projected residential pattern calls for considerable "filling-in" of the 4,000 vacant residential lots in the City.

One of the findings of the land use inventory is noteworthy and is quoted here:

Over 66% of the developed area of the City (the area devoted to some urban use and not including vacant or agriculture land) is in streets and alleys--probably the highest on record for an incorporated city.

Transportation Element

The Transportation Element calls for a system of expressways, major streets, and secondary streets. The secondary streets are "...designed to carry local and neighborhood traffic to major streets for dispersion in all directions."

Community Facilities Element

The Community Facilities Element depicts a series of schools, recreation parks; governmental offices and related service facilities; and institutional health facilities.

Open Space Element

The Open Space Element was adopted on October 4, 1973. In the <u>Introduction</u> of the Element there is an interesting paragraph in defense of open space zoning:

It is certain that there is no guarantee to any owner or potential owner of property of having land zoned to what that particular owner or potential owner may consider to be its highest and best economic use. The welfare of all the citizens of the state--not just for the present brief moment in time, but with a view to the future--greatly

outweighs the interests of any private developer. The context in which the highest and best use of specific land is to be determined is that of the entire municipality. In a legal sense, any loss incurred by an individual as the result of a valid zoning action is part of the price one must pay for living in a society.

Under <u>Recreational Lands</u>, it is revealed that the City of Ridgecrest owns no developed parks, and that "...113 acres should be appropriately developed by the city to meet its Development Standards for Recreation Lands."

Under Historical and Archeological Lands, a Policy is presented:

It is the policy to support and assist the various agencies which have jurisdiction over the historical and archeological land to conserve, develop, and utilize the historical and archeological lands for the benefit and enjoyment of our citizens.

A Policy is offered under Scenic Lands which states:

Every effort must be made to identify, develop, and preserve scenic qualities worthy of preservation. Scenic qualities are important to preserve because they tend to provide an identity to a community and provide for the well-being of the citizens.

In the discussion of <u>Wildlife</u>, there is the following reference to BLM lands within the City near the Community College:

Cerro Coso Community College, which is located on the slopes of the Rademacher Hill (Southwest quarter of Section 22) is surrounded by undeveloped national resource lands under the control of the Bureau of Land Management. The College has requested of the Bureau of Land Management that five sections (20,21,22,27 and 28), which adjoin the College, remain undeveloped and in "trust" for a college natural area or reserve.

Under <u>Natural Resource Lands</u>, a <u>Policy</u> for <u>Mineral Production</u> is presented:

Mineral production, both inside and outside the City, should be planned and performed so as to avoid destruction, pollution, or degradation of surrounding land, air, and water resources. After mineral extraction has been completed, land used for mineral production should be reclaimed and restored to its original site condition or improved for other appropriate uses.

Conservation Element

On December 18, 1973, the City Council adopted a <u>Conservation</u> <u>Element</u>. It includes plans for water, hydraulic forces of water, flora, soils, wildlife, minerals, and other natural resources.

As indicated in the section on <u>Water</u>, the supply of water in the Ridgecrest area is limited:

Indian Wells Valley is a closed desert valley with a limited amount of rainfall. The Valley is completely dependent upon underground water which is supplied primarily by the run-off from the Sierra Nevada to the west with a smaller amount available from rain which falls on the El Paso Mountains to the southwest. The other ranges surrounding the Valley receive limited rainfall and add little to the total, particularly since they tend to drain into the north and northeast sections of the Valley where salt content is high and water is unusable for many purposes. The main water body lies in the central part of the Valley....

In the section on <u>Wildlife</u>, there is this <u>Policy</u>:

The extinction of any species of animals is deemed unacceptable to the citizens of the City. Public and private owners of wildlife habitat are encouraged to operate these areas in a manner that reflects good management principles and conserves the wildlife habitat....

One of the Recommendations under Wildlife is:

3. The City should encourage County, State and Federal agencies to take measures to protect key desert lands from deterioration by such activities as intensive sheep grazing and unregulated off-road vehicle use.

In regard to Other Resources, three statements of Policy are presented to preserve plant life in the area:

- 1. Areas containing unique plant life should be restricted or human use minimized, so uses will not be detrimental to plant types.
- 2. The inclusion of identified areas containing unique plant life into specific land conservation programs by all governmental agencies should be provided.

3. The off-road vehicle use in identified unique plant life areas should be denied.

Scenic Highways Element

The Scenic Highways Element was adopted on February 1, 1978. Under General Goals, the Element includes this statement:

Because the Weapons Center is the major employer in the Ridgecrest area, the primary goal of the people is to support the mission of the Center by maintaining an environment that is necessary to the successful operation of the naval installation. Polluting industries or developments that would limit visibility, water supply, or interfere in any way with the mission of the Center would be unacceptable to the City's goal of supporting the Center. The development of scenic highway corridors must be carefully planned and maintained so that they do not conflict with the mission of the Naval Weapons Center.

The Element recommends, for top priority, a series of six scenic routes which are City major entrance streets and, for secondary priority, a series of six scenic routes which are not considered to be major entrances to the City.

Under the heading of <u>Ecological Preservation</u>, the Element proposes a unique standard for delineating scenic corridor boundaries:

In an area where natural flora and fauna are a major consideration in the selection of a corridor (regardless of their aesthetic beauty), the entire area should be included within the delineated boundaries. This will insure the protection and maintenance of the entire area, thereby preserving the ecological balance of the area.

Commentary

Although the General Plan of the City of Ridgecrest presently is not up to date and lacks several of the elements required by State planning law, a major program is underway to revise the Plan and to make it complete. The two strongest elements at present are the Conservation Element and the Open Space Element; they offer sound policies, plans, and programs which should be considered in the preparation of the California Desert Plan.

The City of Ridgecrest has an above-average rate of growth (about 2 percent annually), and there appears to be some community support for a growth management policy which would

emphasize quality--rather than quantity--of development. Zon-ing is said to be "fairly consistent" with the General Plan.

Some of the concerns about the California Desert Plan are related to wilderness area designations, control of off-the-road vehicles, scenic values, air quality, water quality, and alternate forms of energy. Although there is a wide range of attitudes about quality of the environment, there is a tendency toward preserving, rather than "using up", the resources of the Desert. The Desert is valued highly as a recreational resource.

Inyo County

Preface

On August 5, 1968, the Board of Supervisors adopted the 1990 General Plan for Development: Inyo County, California. The Plan, which was prepared by a planning consulting firm, is unusual in that it does not make reference to plan elements per se. However, The Plan is a comprehensive one, containing sections on population, economy, housing, land use, transportation, circulation, recreation, community services, and other planning-related subjects. It presents three area profiles: The Owens Valley Profile, The Conservation Profile, and The Desert Profile. The Owens Valley Profile takes in the Owens Valley Floor, or about 1,005 square miles of the 10,135 square miles in the County. The Conservation Profile consists of the mountainous areas adjacent to the Valley--about 1,800 square miles, and The Desert Profile covers the remainder of the County--some 7,316 square miles. The Desert Profile area is basically that portion of the CDCA within Inyo County.

To date, Inyo County does not have the following State-man-dated general plan elements: scenic highways, noise, housing, seismic safety, and safety. A General Plan/Update Work Plan has been prepared by the planning staff which proposes a complete re-study of the General Plan and completion of the required elements by May, 1980.

Inyo County is a member of the Inyo-Mono Association of Governmental Entities (IMAGE), along with Mono County and the City of Bishop. Comprehensive planning for the IMAGE area has been conducted by staff members of the three member entities. On June 25, 1975, the IMAGE Board of Directors adopted a Land Use Element, a Transportation Element, a Housing Element, and an Open Space and Conservation Element. The IMAGE area consists of Inyo County and Mono County.

Land Use Element

The 1990 General Plan is based upon a projected population of

26,000 persons in Inyo County by the year 1990 and assumes that the greatest growth will occur in the Owens Valley. Under Land Use, the land use classifications are presented. They are: Urban Communities; Urbanizing Areas; Rural Communities; Special Service Centers; Industry; Agriculture; Water Resources Conservation; Recreation, Streambeds, Greenbelts and Open Space; and Transportation and Circulation. To accommodate an additional 11,000 persons by 1990, only 1,100 acres of additional land will be needed for all urban purposes.

As stated under The Desert Profile:

The desert portion of Inyo County accounts for the largest area of the region. The development emphasis in the Desert Profile is of a recreation-conservation character. The intent of the General Plan for this portion of the County is to guide and encourage the development of recreation attractions and to preserve the uniqueness of the desert environment. Extensive areas are delineated in the categories of conservation-recreation reserve, concentrated recreation area, and open space.

Two of the Assumptions about the Desert are:

The conservation and development of the desert area will continue to be the concern of the Federal Government....

Desert areas will continue to be used for military and defense research and experimentation....

The IMAGE Land Use Element includes a section on <u>Goals and Objectives</u> of which two are quoted here:

- 3. The concentration of urban development in existing communities in order to preserve the natural features and recreation areas of the region....
- 10. Coordination and cooperation with the various governmental agencies which administer the majority of the IMAGE'S land is essential to the orderly development of the region.

Among the several <u>Needs</u>, <u>Deficiencies and Problems</u> are these three:

- 1. Lack of private land in and adjacent to urban centers available for development....
- 5. Competition for available water supply among many users....

8. Increasing threat of water pollution....

Under <u>Population</u>, the population projections for Inyo County "...indicate a population level of 17,300 in 1975 increasing to 19,800 in 1980 and 22,300 in 1985."

Under Land Ownership in the IMAGE Planning Area, Inyo County is reported to have 98.1 percent of its land in public ownership (90.0 percent Federal) and only 1.9 percent in private ownership.

The IMAGE Land Use Plan indicates that in the IMAGE area, the primary land use will be for recreation "...for many years in the future." Under Recreation, there are six "principles and standards"--two of which are:

- 1. An extensive variety of recreational facilities designed to meet the needs of all tourists and permanent residents, should be provided throughout the IMAGE area.
- 2. Recreation lands should be protected from the intrusion of undesireable or incompatible uses....

Under <u>Agriculture</u>, it is stated that agriculture "...represents a minor portion of IMAGE'S economy, however, the contributions made by it are important enough to be preserved." One of the "principals and standards" is:

1. Agriculturally productive lands should be separated and protected from other uses and only those uses related to agriculture should be located on agriculturally productive land....

Under <u>Projected Land Use</u>, the projected land requirements for additional urban needs to 1985 amount to only 1,406 acres for the total IMAGE area.

The Regional Land Use Plan presents only five categories. They are <u>Urban</u>, <u>Recreation Areas</u>, <u>Forest Land</u>, <u>Agriculture</u>/ <u>Grazing</u>, and <u>Industry</u>.

Circulation-Transportation Element

The 1990 General Plan includes sections on <u>Transportation and Circulation</u>. Under the discussion of <u>The Desert Profile</u>, there is this statement:

The highway network has been adapted from the State and County Highway Plans. The transportation and circulation system is composed of scenic primary and secondary highways, airports and landing strips,

and trails for hiking and riding. Primary scenic highways extend from the Tecopa-Shoshone areas northward through Death Valley into Mono County and southwestward-northeastward into San Bernardino County and Nevada. State Route 190 extends from Death Valley Junction northward to Stovepipe Wells then westward to the Owens Valley and across the Sierras to provide access to the desert areas from other parts of this County and the Central Valley. The primary highway system is supported by several secondary scenic highways to complete the system and provide accessibility to all concentrated recreation areas.

Airports are designated at Trona, east of the U. S. Navy Ordnance Test Site and at Furnace Creek in the Death Valley National Monument. Landing strips are identified at Death Valley Junction, Shoshone, Tecopa Pass, Stovepipe Wells, and Darwin.

In the <u>Introduction</u> of the IMAGE Transportation Element, reference is made to the IMAGE Transportation Plan as one which "...represents a condensation of the <u>Inyo County Regional Transportation Plan 1975</u> and <u>Mono County Transportation Plan</u>, coordinated into an IMAGE Regional Overview....". Under <u>Implementation Policies</u>, two of the policies are these:

- 1. Provide for existing and reasonable future growth in population and mobility, but this should not, in general, open new corridors that could induce growth detrimental to the region's unique social and environmental setting....
- 5. Insure minimum adverse impact on the environment, consistent with achieving the goals and the other implementing policies, and enhance the beneficial use of the area's recreational and historical values....

Under <u>Recreational Travel</u> it is stated that the "...most important single element in the development of this Transportation Plan is the traffic generated through recreational usage ...". One of the assumptions presented is:

d. It is important to recognize that a very high percentage (approximately 85%) of all recreational traffic is generated from the Southern California region and will continue a growth trend that will provide a consistent and continuing demand upon recreational usage in the IMAGE Region.

Housing Element

Inyo County does not have a housing element; however, references

are made to housing in the 1990 General Plan. Under <u>Planning Inventory and Analysis</u>, Inyo County housing characteristics and trends are discussed, and the discussion closes with this statement:

The proceeding analysis indicates that housing conditions in Inyo County are below average standards for the State as a whole. Clearly housing quality needs to be improved in Inyo County. To this end the development of a sound housing policy should be aiming at both raising housing quality standards to the State average, at least, as well as maintaining these standards in the future based on population developments.

The IMAGE Housing Element includes a series of <u>Principles</u> among which are these two:

- 3. Vacant land in and around existing settlements and communities should be used for housing development and redevelopment in preference to converting more expensive-to-use, unsubdivided lands....
- 5. Housing problems transcend county boundaries, making it necessary that all agencies and jurisdictions communicate and coordinate programs affecting housing and related items....

Part of the Summary of Housing Problems is quoted here:

In summary, the present supply of dwelling units is not sufficient to house the population of the region and there are not nearly enough units being constructed at the present time to take care of normal population growth of the region. There are also many families living in deteriorated or dilapidated structures....

Under <u>Projected Land Use</u>, in regard to future acreage required for residential development up to the year 1985 "...it is estimated that approximately 800 acres will be necessary to satisfy new housing demand." The greatest proportion of new dwelling units will be needed outside that portion of the CDCA within the IMAGE area.

Open Space and Conservation Elements

The Conservation and Open Space Element was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on June 18, 1973. Under Land Ownership, it is pointed out that the land in Inyo County is almost all publicly owned--"Because of this situation at least 98.2% of Inyo County is presently in an open space state."

In the chapter on <u>Conservation and Open Space Policy</u>, six Goals are presented:

- To identify all land or water areas which have value for a single or multiple open space function.
- 2. To recognize the vital importance of the land and waters that form the habitat for the County's native fish and wildlife species.
- 3. To preserve and protect those open spaces that contribute to the health, welfare, well-being and safety of the citizens of the County, State and Nation.
- 4. To establish the value of open space resources by relating these resources to the maintenance of a total quality environment.
- 5. To encourage maximum cooperation between all levels of government and private organizations in the areas of management, conservation and protection of open spaces resources.
- 6. To realize the impact of governmental and private decisions on the open space resources of the County.

Several <u>Recommendations</u> are presented, of which eleven are of special interest to the California Desert Study:

- 1. Present and future agricultural and grazing lands should be defined and possibly reserved for these purposes....
- 3. Extraction of minerals should be coordinated with other uses.
- 4. Standards for the operation and rehabilitation of extraction operations should be established....
- 8. Encourage proper management and protection of essential native wildlife habitats.
- 9. Encourage careful consideration of the impact to other land uses that wildlife habitats may have.
- 10. The habitat of native rare or endangered species should be preserved in a natural state to the maximum extent possible.
- 11. Encourage the establishment and preservation

of areas of significant ecologic and biotic systems....

- 14. Encourage areas defined as scenic land to be protected from destruction, over-use, and misuse.
- 15. Discourage development of areas of known natural hazard....
- 17. Encourage Federal agencies to use a multipleuse policy for public land....
- 19. Encourage the establishment of open space as a land use, not a non-use.

The IMAGE Open Space and Conservation Element, under <u>Land Ownership</u>, indicates that 87.2 percent of the IMAGE area is under Federal control; only 6.2 percent of the IMAGE area is in private ownership.

The Element includes a chapter on <u>Relationship to Statewide</u>
<u>Historical Preservation Plan</u> in which there is this statement:

In keeping with the policies and goals established in the "California History Plan" efforts have been made to establish a logical and orderly process for the identification and selection of historical features with the IMAGE area...

A set of priorities are presented for the protection of historical features:

- 1. Stabilization of endangered features of outstanding historical significance.
- 2. Restoration of features of outstanding historical significance.
- 3. Reconstruction of features of outstanding historic significance that meet a deficiency within the eras and themes described in the "California history plan".
- 4. Acquisition of private lands lying wholely or partly within historical units or areas.
- 5. Acquisition of historical features that best meet a deficiency identified in the "California History Plan."

Another chapter of interest is <u>Relationship to Statewide Rec-reation Resource Planning</u>. Several responsibilities are recognized by IMAGE in regard to regional recreation, and all of

them are quoted here:

- 1. To provide regional county recreation facilities and services intended for both residents and recreational tourists and visitors.
- 2. Encourage, support and set general standards in the preservation and improvement of the environment.
- 3. To provide technical assistance and liaison with the State and Federal government and to assist in planning activities.
- 4. Recreation needs transcend political boundaries.
- 5. Assist in grant-in-aid programs, and coordination with Federal, State and local agencies.
- 6. Assist in meeting the regional recreational needs generated by a mobile population from the metropolitan areas.
- 7. There is an ever growing impact of seasonal tourist and recreationists from the urban areas that must be planned for to protect the environment and still promote the economic base to the area.

In the chapter on <u>Goals and Objectives</u>, a series of <u>Objectives</u> are presented:

- To protect and conserve the best and most productive agricultural lands which have favorable combinations of slope, climate and soil conditions.
 - 2. Preserve and maintain open space lands as a means of providing natural habitat for all species of wildlife.
 - 3. Conserve and manage lands used for the production of mineral or animal production.
 - 4. Protect and preserve significant historical and cultural sites.
 - 5. Continuing care must be taken to protect open space lands that are also valuable watershed areas and sources of water.
 - 6. Protect areas of unstable soil and geology from intense residential development.

- 7. Designated areas of forest, marsh, desert, and valley land should be preserved for ecologic and biotic systems for research and educational purposes.
- 8. Provide ample land and water areas for recreation.
- 9. Conserve flood plains free of intense residential development.

Recreation Element

The 1990 General Plan includes <u>The Recreation Plan</u> in which there is this introductory statement about Inyo County's role in regional recreation:

Inyo County's vast superlative natural environmental qualities and its proximity to the population centers of Southern California will become an increasingly significant feature of the Southern California region. The natural environmental qualities of Inyo County represent precious benefits for future generations that must not be allowed to be sacrificed.

Two of the Assumptions of the Plan are these:

- -As the pressures of growth in Southern California continue, Inyo County will plan an increasingly important role in providing recreation opportunities for the residents of the Southern California metropolitan region....
- -The greatest growth in the economy of Inyo County will come as a result of increased use of recreation opportunities and facilities....

Two of the Policies are:

- -Provide for the coordination of interrelated recreation planning and policy determinations of the various governmental agencies and private organizations and individuals in the region...
- -Encourage the adoption of Federal, State and local policies and regulations to accomplish the intent of the Recreation Plan.

The Recreation Plan Map includes categories for Concentrated Recreation Areas; Scenic Highways; Scenic, Sightseeing & Study; and Outdoor Living. The Desert portion of the County is envisioned as a vast recreational resource area.

Darwin Specific Plan

In order "...to insure that Darwin will remain a rural residential community..." the Board of Supervisors of Inyo County, on March 28, 1978, adopted the <u>Darwin Specific Plan</u>.

Darwin is a small community of about 60 homes approximately 40 miles southeast of Lone Pine. It is a former mining town which was established in the 1870's. It has since declined to a population of less than 50 persons. The typical lot size is 4,200 square feet, the water system is unreliable, there is no sewer system in the community, and only about 31 of the estimated 60 structures are considered to be habitable.

Because the residents of Darwin "...expressed their belief that the normal building code standards were unreasonably prohibitive and restrictive...", the Board of Supervisors ordered County staff to conduct a study and to prepare a recommendation. The eventual result of the study was the adoption of the Darwin Specific Plan. The policy which was established for Darwin is of special importance to planning for the CDCA--at least in Inyo County:

Rural Communities in the Desert Profile are identified as small, relatively low density, limited growth residential communities.

These settlements may be identified with a specific economic activity, such as mining. Rural Communities are oriented toward residential needs and commercial activities serving those needs (rather than commercial needs associated with recreation or visitor activities). Located in remote areas, Rural Communities are expected to be self-sustaining, particularly as it relates to essential water and sanitation services. Services normally available in Service Centers and Urban Communities may not be readily available in Rural Community locations.

Although the specific Plan recommends a one acre minimum parcel size for Darwin, it also recommends:

An alternate owner-built code specifically designed for the local conditions of the Darwin area which are acceptable to the Building and Safety and Health Departments...

It is important to note that the Resolution of Adoption for the Darwin Specific Plan includes a reference to Title 25, Chapter 1 Subchapter 1, Article 8, Section 1098 et seq. of the California Administrative Code, which authorizes local agencies to adopt special building codes for rural areas where appropriate local conditions exist.

Commentary

The Inyo County General Plan is not yet complete, since it lacks several of the State-mandated elements. The apparent intent of the County staff is to update the 1990 General Plan and to prepare for adoption those elements which are presently missing. Again, the Desert Plan staff should attempt to coordinate its planning efforts with Inyo County during the coming months.

There is said to be a strong commitment to local planning in Inyo County, perhaps because there is some anxiety about the dominance of the Federal government in land ownership in the County. Although the population density is likely to remain very low in this large county, there is relatively little private land available for any expansion of the existing urban communities. There is also said to be some awareness of the need for growth management—particularly in the Bishop area. Zoning consistency with the General Plan is regarded as adequate.

As for concerns about the Desert, problems relating to wild horses and burros are an issue in the County; there is support for protection of the environment, and the degree of control of mining activities is a concern. There is general support for coordination of local planning activities with planning for BLM lands.

Mono County

Preface

Only a small portion of Mono County (about 60 square miles in the southeasterly corner of the County) lies within the CDCA. The area is remote and identifies more with Nevada than it does with California.

The Mono County General Plan was adopted in 1968, but a copy was not made available for this study. However, a copy of the adopted Open Space and Conservation Element and copies of some of the elements of the IMAGE General Plan were obtained for this study. The IMAGE Elements have been discussed in the preceding review of Inyo County's planning program.

Open Space-Conservation Element

The Open Space-Conservation Element, which was prepared by a planning consulting firm, was adopted by the Mono County Board of Supervisors on June 19, 1973.

Under Natural Resources, it is stated that the primary natural

resources within the County "...are the timber areas, although not of commercial value they do have a tremendous value as a recreational asset....". It is also pointed out that the Federal government is the largest land owner in the County:

...Of the 1,555,948 acres held by the Federal government almost 73 percent is administered by the Federal Service. The Bureau of Land Management is the second largest administrator of land, being responsible for 402,946 acres. Most of the land held by BLM is withdrawn for entry for the protection of the City of Los Angeles watershed by the City of Los Angeles....

Under Agricultural Lands, there is this statement:

Agriculture represents a minor portion of Mono County's economy, however, the contribution made by it is important enough for the land to be preserved. These lands should be protected from intrusion by urban uses.

With about 7% of the county suitable for agriculture, only 4.6% of the land is so used...While water resources exist making irrigation possible, most of the land is best suited for cattle grazing....

Under Recreation and Park Land, it is stated that:

Mono County is recognized as an outstanding area for both summer and winter outdoor recreation. The County's forest areas, lakes, rivers, streams and parks offer limitless activities to those who enjoy fishing, boating, hunting, picnicking, scenic excursions, study groups or just relaxation.

In the chapter on <u>The Open Space and Conservation Plans</u>, the various categories are presented. Under <u>Agricultural Lands</u>, one of the <u>Recommendations</u> is: "2. Agricultural uses should be encouraged as a means of conservation and of providing additional open space...".

Under <u>Recreational Land</u>, it is pointed out that about 95 percent of the recreationists visiting Mono County come from Southern California. Three of the Recommendations are:

- 2. Recreational resources should be protected for the future as those resources are largely irreplaceable natural assets....
- 13. The continuing development of major recreation

facilities to serve regional and statewide residents should be encouraged on public lands throughout the county including Federal and State holdings but, always with the objective of conserving the natural resources.

14. The development of major recreational and other related uses should be provided by private enterprise, and at all governmental levels including the County, State and Federal agencies.

Under <u>Wildlife Habitat</u>, one of the <u>Recommendations</u> is:
"5. When planning any alteration to the present environment or habitat, consideration should be given to the effects on fish and wildlife."

Two of the Recommendations under Natural Resource Lands are:

- 1. To preserve areas of natural scenic beauty as areas of active and passive recreation.
- 2. To conserve special use areas which provide great tourist attraction for present and future populations....

One of the <u>Recommendations</u> under <u>Scenic Lands</u> is: "3. Encourage private developers to utilize conservation methods of using the land. Discourage development on steep slopes unless special techniques of construction are used."

Under <u>Watershed</u> and <u>Water Recharge Lands</u>, it is pointed out that:

Forest and mountains cover about 40% of the county; chaparral and sagebrush cover another 40%. The remainder of the area is desert and grasslands. Most of the water in Mono County is the result of heavy snowfall in the higher elevations which feed the many streams and lakes throughout the county...

One of the <u>Recommendations</u> is: "2. Continue to assure the high quality of water within the county by emphasizing programs which protect water supplies from natural and man made pollution."

Commentary

Like Inyo County, Mono County is basically a rural entity with a very low density of population. Although these two counties are distant from metropolitan areas, they are experiencing some of the pressures resulting from the recreational needs of distant urban dwellers. The economy of Mono County depends on recreation and tourism to a great degree.

In regard to planning, Mono County--like Inyo County--is aware of the benefits of planning on a regional basis as evidenced by its participation in the IMAGE program.

In regard to the California Desert Study, it appears that many residents of Mono County do not favor the establishment of additional wilderness areas. Also, there is some concern about being over-run by the hordes of recreation-seeking Southern Californians. Although there is recognition of the economic benefits of tourism and recreation, there seems to be some anxiety about the recent rapid upswing in numbers of recreational visits to the area which are said to be increasing at the rate of 12 percent annually.

Perhaps because the portion of Mono County within the CDCA is so small and so remote, there appears to be no strong local interest in participating in planning for the California Desert.

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IV. THOSE PORTIONS OF IMPERIAL AND SAN DIEGO COUNTIES WITHIN THE CALIFORNIA DESERT CONSERVATION AREA

Introduction

This section of the report deals with a group of two counties and seven cities that are either partly or wholly within the CDCA: all of Imperial County (except for a strip of land along the Colorado River) and the incorporated cities of Brawley, Calexico, Calipatria, El Centro, Holtville, Imperial, and Westmorland; and the easterly one-third of San Diego County.

Imperial County

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on June 25, 1973; it superseded the Land Use Element which was adopted on April 26, 1969. The Element includes a broad statement of Land Use Policy which says, in part:

Agriculture is the current mainstay of Imperial County's economy. Therefore, in order to achieve the General Plan goals it is imperative that the agricultural land be guarded against non-compatible uses....

A list of 15 additional policies are included; eight of them are quoted here:

- 1. Significant prehistoric and historic sites and structures shall be preserved.
- 2. Unique areas of wildlife habitat, desert plants, or land formations shall be preserved.
- 3. Waterways, sand hills, mountains, and other unique geographic areas shall be used for public recreation...
- 7. New routes for aboveground utilities shall be kept to a minimum and shall be located so as to have the least visual impact....
- 9. New heavy industrial, urban, and rural residential development shall, where possible, be on non-agricultural or agriculturally marginal lands.
- 10. New urban development shall be within or immediately adjacent to existing urban development....

- 12. New urban and rural residential development shall have an assured, permanent water supply.
- 13. New urban development shall be out of flood prone or active fault areas....

The Land Use Plan has eight land use classifications: General Agriculture, Urban, Rural Residential, Desert Residential, Recreation, Heavy Industry, Preservation, and Special Public.

The General Agriculture description includes this statement:

... One of the basic tenets of the plan is the preservation of agricultural lands and the improvement of the productivity thereof. Accordingly, most of the available agriculture lands in the irrigated areas designated for agriculture and, in addition, those areas outside of the irrigated areas suitable for agriculture are so designated.

The minimum parcel size for this category is 40 acres. The <u>Urban</u> designation is for:

...low and high density residential, commercial, and industrial development. Most urban classifications are located adjacent to incorporated cities. ... In addition, a new town is planned near the Sidewinder Interchange.

Rural Residential applies to residential areas outside of the urban categories and "...to allow construction of residences in rural settings."

Desert Residential is for "...those areas not suitable for irrigation but which nevertheless are suitable for habitation."

Heavy Industry is for:

...areas deemed to be best suited for manufacturing type activities and include areas which are not suitable for agriculture. Two of the heavy industry areas are located away from urban centers on the main line of the railroad; one near Plaster City; and one in the East desert....

The Recreation designation is for:

...areas located in the vicinity of natural scenic and recreational attractions. These typically encompass areas adjacent to navigable bodies of water or areas utilized by campers and off-road vehicles.

The <u>Preservation</u> designation "...encompasses land containing historical monuments, archaeological remains, wildlife sanctuaries, unique geologic areas. It is the intent of this plan to preserve these areas to the maximum extent feasible."

The <u>Special Public</u> designation is for areas such as ordinance testing in the Chocolate Mountains or a desalting pond in the Salton Sea.

The Element includes a statement on <u>Geothermal Development</u>, which says, in part:

...It is the intent of this Plan...to encourage exploration and development projects in order to increase the store of knowledge surrounding this useful resource. It is further the intent that a geothermal element of the General Plan is to be prepared to guide ultimate development....

Circulation Element

The Circulation Element was adopted on May 26, 1969. It is a brief document which contains no clear statement of goals, objectives, and policies for the circulation needs of the County. The text consists primarily of a description of the existing facilities such as railroads, airports, highways, and freeways. Three categories of circulation-transportation are indicated on the <u>Ultimate Land Use Plan</u>. They are <u>Major Freeways</u>, Other Major Highways, and <u>Railroads</u>.

Housing Element

The Housing Element was adopted in October, 1970. No copy was made available for this report.

Open Space Element

The Open Space Element was adopted on August 21, 1973. There are seven <u>Goals and Objectives</u> in the Element--six of them are quoted here:

- 1. Agricultural open space will be conserved and checkerboard urban infringement will be prevented.
- 2. Recreational uses of open space will be restricted to areas adjacent to major thoroughfares or major bodies of water.
- 3. Minimum lot sizes for open spaces will be increased to inhibit economical development of speculative unimproved subdivisions.

- 4. Subject to availability of irrigation water, desert area open space will be secondary to agricultural open space.
- 5. It is recommended that the Department of Interior continue suspension of sales of desert land in the 5 to 20 acre parcel size.
- 6. Any recreational development permitted in wilderness or primitive areas must be developed in such a manner as to minimize the environmental impact....

Under Military Lands, there is a discussion of military holdings in the County--part of which is quoted here:

It is assumed that the military holdings will continue for the foreseeable future. The military leases substantial areas of land from the Bureau of Land Management and other agencies for training and experimental operations...A portion of the military lands may be open to the public over certain weekends on a permit basis, with the military retaining the right to deny or cancel ORV races or recreational uses when...necessary....

In the chapter on <u>Open Space for the Preservation of Natural Resources</u>, there is a series of <u>Goals and Objectives</u>—three of which are:

- 4. Encourage only those uses and activities that are compatible with the fragile desert, aquatic, and marshland environment.
- 5. Encourage the preservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the desert and mountain land-scape.
- 6. Promote scientific knowledge by encouraging the preservation of important ecological, archeological, and other scientific sites....

In the chapter on Open Space Lands for the Managed Production of Resources, there is a list of six Goals and Objectives:

- 1. Recognize the intrinsic value of agricultural land as open space which provides aesthetic relief from urbanization.
- 2. Retain prime agricultural land for exclusive agricultural use whenever possible or feasible.
- 3. Confine future urbanization within or adjacent

to designated urban limits.

- 4. Encourage sound agricultural practices.
- 5. Encourage the exploration for and development of new sources of geothermal energy.
- 6. Encourage the economic and necessary extraction of mineral and quarry resources while protecting the natural environment and desert setting.

Three of the Goals and Objectives included in the chapter on Open Space for Outdoor Recreation are:

- 1. Recognize the regional significance of the development and conservation of recreational opportunities in Imperial County.
- 2. Preserve and protect natural values in wilderness areas designated for recreational use. Passive recreation facilities may be consistent with the preservation of natural habitat areas under certain conditions....
- 5. Preserve and protect areas of historic and cultural significance, including unique archeological sites.

In the chapter on <u>Open Space for the Protection of Public</u>

<u>Health and Safety</u> there is a list of five <u>Goals and Objectives</u>;

three of them are:

- 1. Recognize that certain lands are unsuitable for urban development, and that prohibition and restriction of intensive uses in these areas are in the best public interest....
- 3. Recognize that the negative effect of undesirable development is not limited to one site, but may significantly effect neighboring areas of uses as well.
- 4. Integrate hazard prone areas into the planned development of the County for non-intensive uses. These include but are not limited to, open space, recreation, and agricultural land uses....

The Element includes four colored maps which illustrate the various open space categories under Open Space for the Preservation of Natural Resources; Open Space for the Managed Production of Resources; Open Space for Outdoor Recreation; and Open Space for the Protection of Public Health and Safety.

Conservation Element

The Conservation Element was adopted on December 18, 1973. The Element includes discussions of the following resources: water, minerals, soils, agricultural lands, energy, geothermal, and biological.

Water Resources are discussed at great length in the text of the Element. One of the <u>Objectives</u> is: "3. Provide for the regulation of land-uses so as to economize on water consumption and to minimize negative effects upon water resources." Four of the <u>Policies</u> are:

- 1. Evaluate all development proposals to determine excessive, unforeseen loads on existing water and waste management facilities....
- 4. Encourage the adoption of improved methods of irrigation which will provide more efficient utilization of water.
- 5. Identify and evaluate watershed areas which exhibit site deterioration from excessive erosion. Development or intensive recreational use of these areas should be prohibited....
- 7. The recreation, scenic, and wildlife values of water resources are very important in Imperial County. The effect of proposed uses upon these values must be carefully examined.

In the chapter on <u>Land Resources-Minerals</u>, two <u>Objectives</u> are presented:

- 1. Encourage the maximum utilization of available mineral resources consistent with the protection of the natural environment.
- 2. Protect areas of significant mineral resource value, including available sand and gravel sources, from unplanned urbanization.

Three of the Policies are:

- 1. Mineral resource potential should be an important consideration when land-uses are proposed for an area....
- 3. Review, adopt, and implement detailed development and performance standards necessary to mitigate the several environmental problem areas associated with mineral extraction...

5. In areas of suspected archeological importance, professional evaluation of the archeological significance of a particular site is required prior to the approval or denial of an application to extract minerals.

Under Land Resources-Soils, seven <u>Policies</u> are stated; four of them are of special importance to the Desert Study:

- 1. Soil characteristics and limitations are integral factors in determining the desirability and suitability of a proposed land use.
- 2. Direct land uses into areas which are intrinsically suitable and capable of supporting them.
- 3. Provide for the regulation of development or development practices that may increase wind or gully erosion or diminish the usefulness of local soils....
- 7. The disturbance of fragile soils and ground-cover in desert areas is of significant concern. The County concurs in principle with the Bureau of Land Management's Off-Road Vehicle Plan.

One of the <u>Issues</u> in the chapter on <u>Land Resources-Agricultural Lands</u> is: "1. Continuing loss of agricultural lands to urbanization resulting from rural lot splits and approval of subdivisions outside of urban limits." One of the <u>Objectives</u> is: "1. Preserve the majority of productive agricultural lands for the purpose of providing food and fiber to local, state, and national markets." Three of the <u>Policies</u> are also quoted here:

- 1. Land suitable for irrigated agriculture is perhaps the most significant natural attribute of the County and its protection and enhancement is in the best interests of all County residents.
- 2. Applications for rural lot-splits below an accepted minimum acreage, as well as isolated subdivisions outside urban limits, should be denied....
- 4. Preservation of agricultural lands in the long run is dependent upon public understanding and commitment. The County should encourage these attitudes by a program of public education regarding the long and short term benefits of land-use decisions of this type based upon resource protection and enhancement.

Four of the Policies presented in the chapter on Energy

Resources are relevant to the Desert Study:

- 1. Encourage the exploration and development of new types and sources of energy such as geothermal and solid waste conversion consistent with the protection of the natural environment....
- 3. Examine with governmental and private energy suppliers, the feasibility and desirability of certain areas within the County as energy facility sites.
- 4. Formulate stringent controls and guidelines to assure that energy exploration, generation facilities and transmission lines will not have a deleterious effect upon the natural environment of Imperial County.
- 5. The County should review its energy requirements, both for stationary and mobile sources, and examine ways to reduce consumption.

One of the <u>Issues</u> expressed in the chapter on <u>Geothermal Resources</u> is: "1. Long and short term social, economic, and environmental effects resulting from development of geothermal resources intended to satisfy local and regional demand." The discussion of <u>Policies</u> includes this statement:

Environmental protection is of critical importance when considering resource development. The demand for energy appears to be insatiable, and to destroy or jeopardize other equally important resources in an attempt to satisfy this demand is thoughtlessly nearsighted.

Three of the Policies are:

- 1. Encourage the exploration and development of geothermal resources by public and private organizations consistent with protection of environmental values...
- 3. Geothermal resources, while potentially of considerable importance, will not be permitted to degrade the natural environment or threaten the continued viability of irrigated agriculture.
- 4. Participate in and promote a program to develop and centralize data relevant to the geothermal resource for the purpose of providing long-range direction based upon reliable technical information...

One of the Objectives presented in the chapter on Biological

Resources is: "1. Recognize the fragile character of plant and wildlife resources and their dependence upon quality habitat." All of the <u>Policies</u> presented appear to be relevant to the California Desert Study:

- 1. Identify, plan, and program for the protection of areas of unique value in their natural state for educational, scientific, ecological, or aesthetic purposes.
- 2. Provide for the protection and enhancement of wetland or specialized habitat which provides water, forage, protection and resting area for Pacific Flyway waterfowl and other wildlife.
- 3. Development practices that upset natural habitat in wetlands or riverine areas should be controlled to minimize erosion and maximize beneficial vegetative growth.
- 4. Restrict the type of development permitted on floodplains both for the protection of public health and safety and to provide recreational open space and wildlife habitat.
- 5. Agricultural operations are encouraged to maintain or protect areas of natural habitat where terrain or soil is not conducive to agricultural production. Burning of river bottom adjacent to agricultural land but not in production should be carefully controlled.
- 6. Encourage and support objectives and policies of the California Office of Planning and Research and the Department of Fish and Game for the protection of rare or endangered species by identification, education, habitat conservation, and effective management programs.

The Element includes a series of well-prepared colored maps illustrating resource sites in the County.

Scenic Highways Element

The Scenic Highways Element was adopted on October 1, 1974. One of the <u>Functions of the Scenic Highway</u> is: "2. To promote scenic utilization of unique natural resource formations, desert landscapes, water-related environments, historical sites, and scenic vistas..." The two <u>Issues</u> presented in the Element are:

1. The county has a moral and legal responsibility

to preserve and protect scenic corridors adjacent to highways within its boundaries.

2. The county has the opportunity to develop all modes of scenic recreational travel within its boundaries.

One of the <u>Goals</u> is: "2. The preservation, enhancement and protection of Imperial County's scenic resources by appropriate controls." Two of the stated <u>Objectives</u> are:

- 2. Development of multiple modes of scenic travel through acquisition, public works, and vegetation utilization.
- 3. Utilization of controls strategies to preserve and protect the area's scenic resources....

Portions of one Interstate Route and two State Highways are on the California Master Plan of State Highways Eligible for Official Scenic Highway Designation. They are: Interstate 8 from the San Diego County line to its junction with State Highway 98, State Highway 78 from the San Diego County line to State Highway 86; and a short segment of State Highway 111 from the Riverside County line to Bombay Beach. The Element proposes the Salton-Borrego Seaway (County Highway S-22 between State Highway 86 and the San Diego County line) as a Potential Scenic Highway.

An unusual feature of the Element is the category of <u>Scenic</u> <u>Airways</u>, which is described in the text:

The many varied designs formation and colors of Imperial County's landscape take on a different perspective when viewed from the air. Many sites, designs, natural formations, locational inter-relationships, and unusual colors might never be seen or appreciated without air access. A group of air routes allowing scenic enjoyment, giving navigational practice, and channelizing tourist air traffic would be suitable for designation as a scenic airway system.

Noise Element

On October 1, 1974, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Noise Element.

One of the <u>Issues</u> presented is: "(6) Excessive noise raises tensions, stress, and interferes with relaxation. The present level of noise is not conducive to rest, recreation, and relaxation." One of the <u>Objectives</u> is: "(1) To minimize the

intrusion of excessive noise into any sensitive environment."

Under <u>General Policies</u>, there is the following statement which summarizes the County's broad approach to the problem of noise:

Noise is a major source of environmental pollution which represents a threat to the serenity and quality of life in population centers and rural areas. Noise exposure may be a cause of adverse physiological or psychological effects as well as economic losses. Accordingly, it is County policy a) to call attention to this threat, b) to encourage the control of noise at its source in cooperation with other State and local departments and agencies, c) to encourage land utilization patterns for housing and other needs that will separate uncontrollable noise sources from residential and other noise-sensitive areas, d) and to prohibit support to future construction of noise sensitive uses on sites having unacceptable noise exposures.

Seismic Safety Element

The Seismic Safety Element was adopted on November 23, 1976.

The Element reports under <u>Findings</u> that the County lies "... within one of the most tectonically active regions in the nation and thus is in a high severity zone for maximum expectable earthquake intensity...". Two of the <u>Policies</u> are:

- A. To establish limitations on the usage of land as required by State Law. Measures should be taken to promote more compatible land uses for areas of determined seismic and geologic hazard such as the designation of Open Space, Recreation, etc....
- E. To consider areas of seismic hazard when:

1. Making land trades or sales;

- 2. Planning roads and utility networks;
- 3. Planning future utility requirements.

The Element includes an <u>Imperial County Fault Map</u> and Appendix B, which consists of an interesting account entitled <u>Imperial Valley Earthquake History</u>.

Safety Element

The Board of Supervisors adopted the Safety Element on March 1, 1977.

Several hazards are presented under <u>Findings</u>; three of them are:

- 2. The most significant non-seismic geologic hazard in Imperial County is expansive soils....
- 5. Subsidence is a factor which may in some instances accompany geothermal development. Whether or not it will be a factor in Imperial County remains to be seen. If so, reinjection of geothermal fluids may be required in order to stabilize the soil level...
- 7. While the dangers of flash flooding are evident, there is a lack of precise data concerning the probable location of flash flooding and its accompanying effects (land and mudslides)....

Three of the <u>Safety Policies</u> that pertain to geologic hazards are:

- 1. Identify, delineate, and appraise potentially hazardous geologic and flood hazard areas within the County....
- 4. Promote compatible land uses for areas of determined geologic hazard such as the designation of open space, recreation, or agriculture....
- 9. Discourage the locating of structures for human occupancy in areas subject to determined geologic or flood hazards (including areas subject to severe flash flooding and its related landslides and mud flows)....

Geothermal Element

The Geothermal Element, which was prepared by a group of consultants, was adopted on November 22, 1977. As explained under Scope of the Element:

Imperial County has long considered the potential of geothermal development to be significant enough to merit developing a geothermal element. To provide the data for the Element, a National Science Foundation Grant was sought in 1973. Funding was approved in 1975 and research performed by the University of California at Riverside and the California Institute of Technology. The ultimate purpose of the research program has been to provide the data base for the Geothermal Element. The specific papers prepared by the University of California at Riverside and the California Institute of Technology are shown in the Bibliography and are included by reference....

In addition to research on such matters as seismic effects, subsidence, water requirements, reinjection, transmission lines, effect upon agriculture, and environmental impacts, the Element includes the results of a public opinion survey on geothermal development. It is reported under <u>Public Opinion</u> that:

- (1). About 90% of the population favors development.
- (2). 19% feel they have a good understanding of geothermal development.
- (3). 75% thought preserving the environment was an important issue.
- (4). 75% of the population favors strict regula-

In the chapter on <u>Research Analysis</u>, one of the findings reported is "...that between 7,000 and 20,000 megawatts could be developed for a thirty (30) year period from the liquid resource alone...". Another determination is that "...a very small percentage of agricultural land would be needed to produce the program geothermal resource and that this land could be replaced by developing land not in production or not in irrigation...".

Three of the <u>Assumptions</u> of the Element are:

- 1. It is assumed that electrical demand will increase in the foreseeable future.
- 2. It is assumed that electricity developed from geothermal energy will be competitive in cost with electricity developed from other sources....
- 6. It is assumed that all development can be kept environmentally attractive and acceptable....

Under <u>Issues/Policies</u>, several policies are presented--seven of which are quoted here.

- ·It shall be the policy of the County to require each producer to provide information concerning the anticipated life of each geothermal facility...
- Prevention of subsidence is vital to the continued well being of agricultural operations...
- ... the County shall require that production facilities be sited in such a manner designed to lessen impact on agriculture....

- 'The County shall require that all transmission lines be located in designated corridors and be designed to minimize the impact on agricultural operations, urban areas and recreational activities....
- ...additional sources of water for geothermal production must be developed....
- *Encourage the development of the direct, nonelectric use of geothermal energy...
- Provide all information possible to inform the public on matters pertaining to the geothermal resources.

Commentary

All of the State-required elements are included in the Imperial County General Plan. The Open Space Element, the Conservation Element, and the Geothermal Element are of special importance to the Desert Study. Perhaps because most of the County is in the Public Domain, the County planning programs tend to reflect an awareness of the value of cooperating with the Federal government in long-range planning activities.

The Land Use and Circulation Elements are in need of review and possible up-dating. Zoning consistency with the Plan is said to be "somewhat" adequate. Although one of the basic policies of the County is to protect and preserve agriculture as an important economic asset, there are increasing threats of encroachment on agricultural lands by urban expansion and by the creation of rural residential sites. Up to this date, however, no land in the County has been placed under agricultural preserve contract (Williamson Act).

The County growth rate is said to be in access of two percent per year, and there is no significant clamor for growth control or growth management. Residents of the County tend to be growth-oriented. There is an awakening public interest in comprehensive planning, however.

One of the principal concerns about the Desert relates to recreation; officials and residents are worried about the increasing number of "outsiders" who use the Desert for a weekend playground and who also are creating problems in emergency health-care, litter control, law enforcement, and other public services. There is great interest in geothermal energy and location of transmission line corridors, but little interest in solar energy. There is strong support for increased coordination of Federal and local planning activities. There is also an active interest in the progress of the California Desert Plan preparation, but some disappointment about "lack of representation" on the California Desert Conservation Area Advisory Committee.

City of Brawley

Introduction

The City of Brawley is located near the geographic center of the Imperial Valley. It is surrounded by agricultural land. The City was incorporated in 1908.

The area of the City is slightly more than three square miles, and the area of the City's adopted Sphere of Influence is approximately $8\frac{1}{2}$ square miles. There are no BLM lands within the City or its Sphere of Influence.

The population of the City of Brawley is estimated to be about 15,000; the rate of growth is slow. The economy of the City is based upon agriculture and related activities.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element is part of the <u>Comprehensive General Plan</u> For the City of Brawley, which was prepared by a consulting firm and adopted in August, 1974. The Plan also included Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Seismic Safety, Public Safety, Noise, Community Facilities, and Community Design Elements.

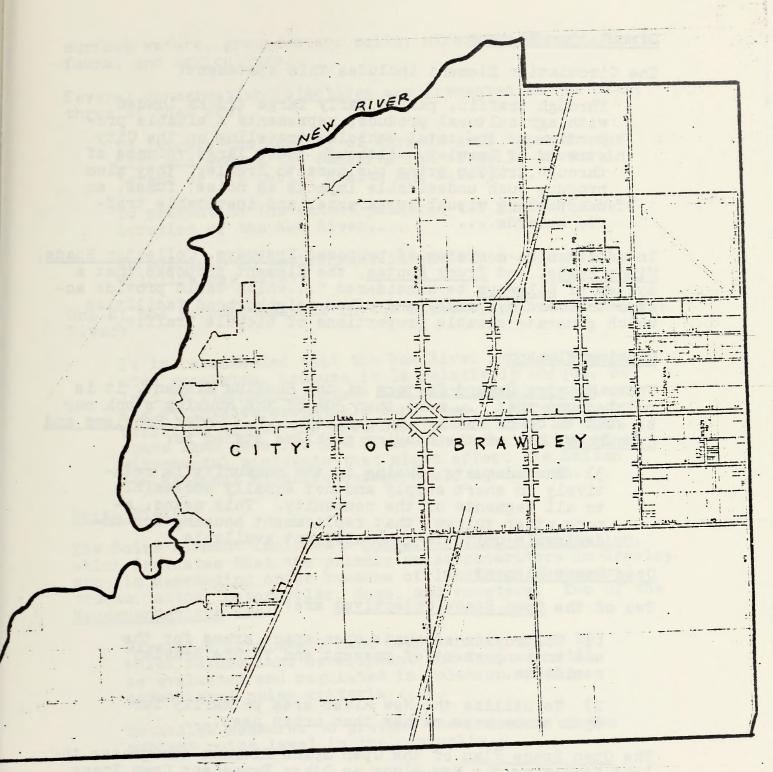
The Land Use Element does not include statements of goals and policies; however, in the chapter on Implementation, Objectives and Recommendations, one of the Objectives is: "2) To promote the best possible configurations and design of uses within the expansion areas of the Planning areas."

In addition to various urban designations, the Element includes a category of Open Space Preserved for Future Urban Use, which is explained in the text:

This classification attempts to provide a safeguard against premature development of areas which may eventually be used for urban purposes. However, at this point in time other areas are deemed more suitable for development.

Another open space category is <u>Desirable Permanent Open Space</u> which is intended for "...areas which for one or more reasons (scenic qualities, hazard propensity, unsuitability for urban use) should remain open in the foreseeable future."

The Element is based upon a projected one percent annual growth rate to 1990 and beyond. The projected land use pattern indicates that most of the Sphere of Influence will be urbanized.





SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

Circulation Element

The Circulation Element includes this statement:

Through traffic, particularly large trucks loaded with agricultural produce, represents a sizable proportion of the total vehicles traveling on the City streets of Brawley. Although these large volumes of through traffic bring business to Brawley, they also produce such undesirable impacts as noise, fumes, an unappealing visual appearance, and inevitable traffic hazards....

In addition to a system of proposed <u>Freeways</u>, <u>Collector Roads</u>, <u>Minor Roads</u>, and <u>Truck Routes</u>, the Element proposes that a system of <u>Bikeways</u> be considered "...which would provide access to schools, parks, and other neighborhood facilities which generate sizable proportions of bicycle traffic."

Housing Element

Under <u>Housing Demand Factors</u> of the Housing Element, it is pointed out that "...more than 30% of the housing stock may be said to be of fairly low quality...". Under <u>Problems and Resources</u>, one of the housing problems stated is:

3) The adequate housing in the community is relatively in short supply and not equally accessible to all segments of the community. This means, among other things, that replacement housing for undesirable units is generally not available.

Open Space Element

Two of the Open Space Objectives are:

- 1) To provide adequate open space areas for the use and enjoyment of present and future Brawley residents.
- 2) To utilize the New River area primarily for open space uses rather than urban uses....

The Open Space Plan of the Open Space Element designates the land bordering the New River as Other Permanent Open Space and large areas outside the City limits as Future Growth Areas. This does not lead one to believe that the latter areas will remain in open space uses for a very long time.

Conservation Element

The Conservation Element includes discussions of climate,

surface waters, groundwater, soils, minerals, energy, flora, fauna, and agriculture.

Several conservation <u>Objectives</u> are presented in the Plan; three of them are:

To improve the quality of various soil types in the City and ensure the conservation of soils in the interest of the public health and safety....

To prevent to the extent possible the further deterioration of the New River....

To maintain an environment in which non-nuisance wildlife may exist.

One of the recommendations in the Element applies to the New River:

It is recommended that the New River and its associated ecosystem, because it is relatively unique, be left in its natural state and that planning concerning it involve compatible land uses....Moreover, by utilizing either the greenbelt/scenic area or open space land uses for New River, the possibility of environmental accidents that might effect the Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge would be reduced....

Noise Element

The Noise Element includes a <u>Summary of Noise Evaluation</u>, which indicates that the primary noise generators in Brawley are (in descending order because of length of occurence): trucks, autos, motorcycles, dogs, and roosters. Two of the Recommendations are:

Develop a consistent land use planning guide by which future land development and land use will be evaluated and regulated in relation to the established noise criteria....

Establish measures to prevent the increase of the ambient noise level in the community....

Seismic Safety Element

Under the heading of <u>Identification of National Seismic Haz-ards</u> in the Seismic Safety Element, there is this statement:

No faults are presently known to exist within the Brawley Planning Area. However, as noted above, this conclusion is based on minimal data. Therefore,

it is considered highly possible that one or more concealed faults may be present within the Planning Area. Such faults could only be located by extensive and detailed subsurface exploration.

The Flement does point out, however, that the Planning Area "...is considered to have a high potential for liquefaction ...".

One of the seismic safety <u>Recommendations</u> is: "Ensure that all development in the City takes into consideration existing geologic conditions and makes provisions to mitigate the effects of any possible hazards which might result from such conditions."

Public Safety Element

In the introductory section of the Public Safety Element, it is pointed out that: "In Brawley, as in most other cities, perhaps the public safety hazard with the greatest frequency of occurrence is that of fire....".

The Element includes the following statement about geologic hazards:

Apart from landslides which are effectively limited to those areas along the eastern edge of the New River, there appears to be only one other geologic hazard which may or may not be associated with earthquakes. This would be the chance of structural damage as the result of subsidence or settling on individual properties...

Community Facilities Element

The Community Facilities Element pertains to public utilities, recreational facilities, public safety buildings, educational facilities, civic center, and other facilities for the City.

Under <u>Recreational Facilities</u>, there is an interesting statement about park standards as they relate to the City of Brawley:

...the National Parks and Recreation Association recommends a standard of 10 acres of local park sites per thousand people in a community. Additionally, the same organization recommends a minimum of twenty acres of regional park sites per thousand people. Yet, in a city such as Brawley, such standards seem almost irrelevant, because Brawley enjoys a rather unique situation as compared with many other communities. For example, the City is nearly surrounded by open space areas,

much of which is devoted to agriculture, some of which is reserved for recreational use.... There is ample open space in and around Brawley; hence the demand for park acreage is perhaps somewhat less than it would be in a metropolitan area....

One of the <u>Recommendations</u> for community facilities is: "To concentrate on enhancing the existing recreational facilities for the City of Brawley."

Community Design Element

The three Objectives of the Community Design Element are:

To strengthen the visual identity of the City.

To enhance and maintain existing vistas.

To strengthen the visual form and structure of the City.

One of the significant recommendations of the Element is presented under <u>Scenic Highways</u>:

The City of Brawley and its surrounding planning areas do not now contain a designated Scenic Highway. It is not recommended that such designation be given any present or proposed future routes in the immediate vicinity.

Instead it is recommended that the City in conjunction with Community design efforts attempt to improve the visual quality of the major thoroughfares within the Planning Area.

Commentary

The Comprehensive General Plan for the City of Brawley is a complete and unified document which appears to be a sound guide for the City's anticipated growth and change. All of the State-mandated elements are included in the Plan, with the exception of the Scenic Highways Element which is considered in the Community Design Element as explained above. The Housing Element is presently being revised.

The present annual rate of growth of the City is about one percent. Only minor inconsistencies are said to exist between the zoning ordinance and the General Plan. Residents do not seem to perceive a need for growth control, and they appear to be generally satisfied with the present slow rate of growth. Community commitment to the General Plan is described as "faithful". There is a serious shortage of adequate housing in the City.

In regard to the California Desert Study, there is considerable interest in Desert recreation with some apprehension about ORV restrictions. The sand dunes area is highly valued as a recreational resource. There are concerns about water quality, air quality, transmission corridors, and visual clutter. There is an awakening interest in archaeology and continued interest in hunting. Interest in energy sources—particularly geothermal energy—is prevalent.

City of Calexico

Introduction

The City of Calexico is located in the flat Imperial Valley between the New River and the Alamo River. It lies along the California-Baja California International Boundary, north of the City of Mexicali. It is surrounded on three sides by agricultural lands.

The area of the City is 2.5 square miles, and the area of the City's adopted Sphere of Influence is approximately 6.5 square miles. The only BLM land in the area consists of a small parcel (about .3 acre) in the southwest corner of the City.

The population of the City was estimated to be 13,568 by the State Department of Finance in February, 1978. The present growth rate is relatively slow. The economy of the City is dependent upon the agricultural activities in the general area; and, because it is a principal point of entry between Mexico and the United States, the City derives benefits from tourism and commercial activities.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element was part of the <u>General Plan for the City of Calexico</u>, which was prepared by a consulting firm and adopted on February 7, 1967. In addition to the Land Use Element, the Plan included a Major Street Plan, a Park and Recreation Plan, and a Public Buildings Plan.

A revised Land Use Element was adopted in 1975. It includes a text and a map which designates various urban land uses within the present City but does not designate future land uses within the remainder of the Sphere of Influence. Low density residential use is defined as "...no more than 4 units per acre and/or minimum lot of not less than 10,000 square feet...".

Circulation Element

The revised Circulation Element was adopted in 1974.



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The Element includes several <u>Principles</u>--one of which does not often appear in circulation elements of local general plans: "To plan and implement the existing streets and/or construction of new streets according to the density and type of land uses designated on the General Plan."

The circulation categories are: <u>Principal Arterial</u>, <u>Minor Arterial</u>, and <u>Collector</u>.

Housing Element

The Housing Element was adopted in 1975. A field survey of housing was conducted during July of 1974 and revealed that-out of a total number of 2767 dwellings--713 were in need of repair.

The Element also reported from the 1970 census that 23 percent of the 1,945 families in the City were below the poverty level as compared to 16 percent in all of Imperial County.

Under <u>Housing Problems</u>, one of the statements is: "Urban housing problems for Calexico may be summarized as follows: neglect, exploitation, abandon, powerlessness, indifference and shortage."

It is also pointed out that: "There simply are not enough units in sound condition to satisfy the existing population."

Open Space Element

The Open Space Element was adopted in 1974. One of the Goals of the brief Element is: "1. Promote and enhance the natural environment and not disrupt the ecological balance." The Element points out that "...in the New River area is approximately 104 acres of virtually undeveloped land for future recreational purposes...". One of the Proposals for Open-Space Programs is:

Located in the New River bottom, "Lago del Sol" is proposed as a recreational development for swimming, fishing and skiing. With over 43 acres of water surface and nearly two miles of shore line, "Lago del Sol" will attract recreation minded people from all over the Imperial Valley, as well as outside areas. Coupled with the existing golf and gun club within walking distance, this will be as complete a recreational facility as can be found anywhere.

Noise Element

The Noise Element, which was adopted in 1974, states under Identification of Noise Sources that: "The majority of all noise produced within Calexico is the result of automotive

vehicles. The most serious offenders are trucks, motorcycles and those automobiles with loud exhausts...". The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Calexico International Airport are also identified as significant contributors to the noise problem.

Scenic Highways Element

The Scenic Highways Element, which was adopted in 1974, includes this recommendation under <u>Corridors</u>:

The Railroad Rights-of-Way can play an important role in the beautification and identification of urban structure of Calexico. It is recommended that all rights-of-way within the City be treated with appropriate landscaping thereby creating a visual and physical buffer.

The Element proposes portions of Imperial Avenue, Anza Road; Highway 111, and Highway 98 as future scenic highways to receive landscape treatment.

Safety Element

The Goal of the Safety Element, which was adopted in 1974 is:

The goal of the Safety Element is to minimize danger to life and property from fires, geological hazards, man-made or natural disasters by providing water, sanitary facilities, evacuation routes, clearances around structures and open space or park areas for the sheltering of the affected members of the community in the event of such disasters.

Seismic Safety Element

The Seismic Safety Element was also adopted in 1974. The Imperial Fault and the Superstition Hills Fault are identified as ones which present a possible threat to the City.

The Element includes a set of four <u>Goals</u>, but does not present a set of seismic safety policies. One of the <u>Goals</u> is: "Determine the probability of earthquakes and related factors in the Calexico area."

Commentary

The General Plan of the City of Calexico may be described as brief but not necessarily "to the point". All of the elements required by State planning law are included in the General Plan except the Conservation Element. The planning staff is in the process of revising some of the elements.

There is varying commitment to the General Plan, and zoning is said to be consistent with the Plan "except in part of the Downtown area." The housing shortage is due in part to the population pressures in the Mexicali metropolitan area, which is said to be approaching a population of 700,000 persons. There is not much vacant land for residential expansion remaining within the City of Calexico; some of the agricultural land outside the City is phasing out to residential and other urban uses. There is no apparent awareness of need for growth control or growth management in the City.

Some of the concerns about the Desert Plan Program relate to geothermal energy, transmission corridors, air quality, and water quality. Some residents are said to wonder about possible impacts of the Desert Plan on Calexico. Some see a need for greater coordination with Mexico in the preparation of the California Desert Plan.

City of Calipatria

Introduction

The City of Calipatria is located in the Imperial Valley on State Highway 111 about six miles southeast of the Salton Sea. It is surrounded by flat agricultural lands.

The area of the City is 1.5 square miles, and the area of the City's adopted Sphere of Influence is 2.5 square miles. There are no BIM lands within or near the City.

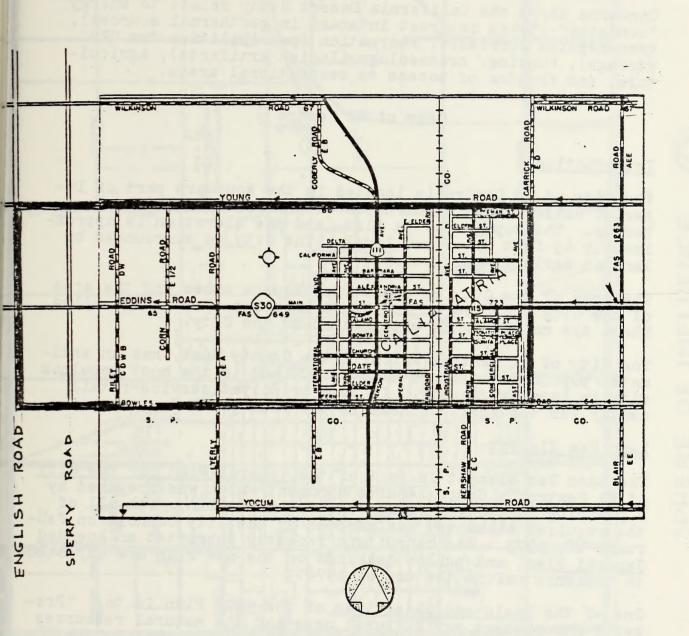
The population is unofficially estimated to be 2,400; a special census in 1976 revealed a population of 2,174. The City serves as a small residential-commercial center for the surrounding agricultural enterprises.

General Plan

An interview with the Secretary of the City Planning Commission revealed that the City's General Plan is incomplete. The Official Zoning Map was displayed at the time of the interview along with a sketch map of a proposed Land Use Plan. No other elements of the General Plan have been made available for this study.

Commentary

It seems safe to conclude that the City of Calipatria does not have an active planning program. If any of the State-mandated general plan elements have been adopted by the City Council, they are not being widely circulated nor are they being displayed for public viewing.



SPHERE OF INFLUENCE CITY OF CALIPATRIA The City's rate of growth is said to be rapid, and there is some public interest in planning--according to the official who was interviewed for this study.

Concerns about the California Desert Study relate to energy "concepts" (there is great interest in geothermal sources), transmission corridors, recreation (possibilities for ORV storage), hunting, archaeology (Indian artifacts), agriculture, and freedom of access to recreational areas.

City of El Centro

Introduction

The City of El Centro is located in the southern part of Imperial Valley about eight miles to the north of the Mexican border. The topography is flat, and the elevation is approximately 45 feet below sea level. The City is surrounded by land in agricultural uses.

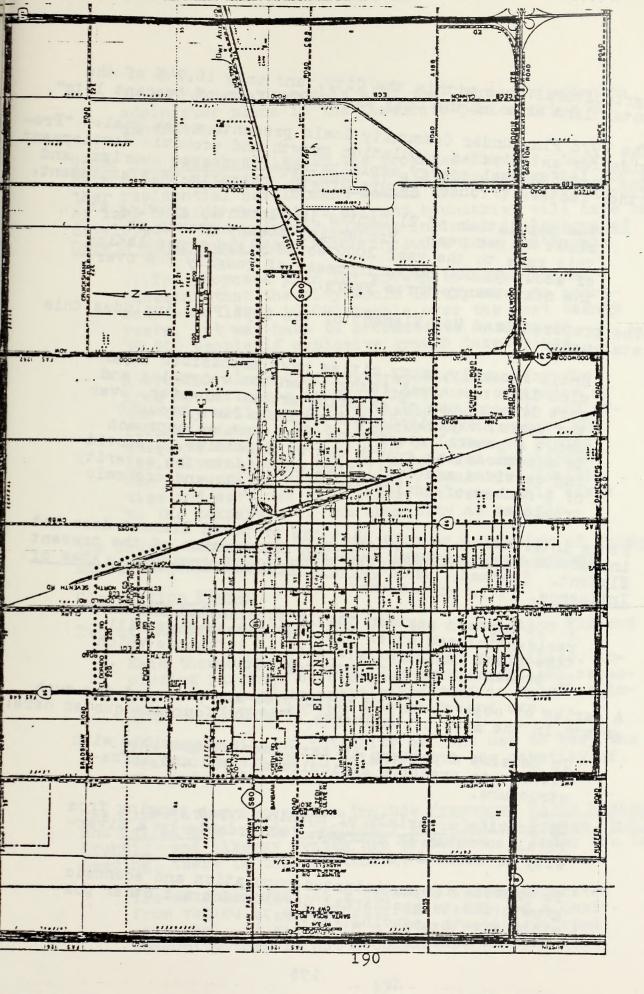
The area of the City is almost 5.2 square miles and the area of the City's Sphere of Influence is about 17.5 square miles. There are no BLM lands within or near the City.

The City of El Centro, which is the County Seat, has an estimated population of more than 23,000 and is the most populous city in Imperial County. It is a principal service-retail center for the agri-business in the County.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element is part of the <u>General Plan for the City of El Centro</u>, a comprehensive document which was prepared by a planning consulting firm. The detailed Plan, with all of the required elements, was adopted by the City Council on February 28, 1973. The consultant recently submitted an <u>Amended General Plan</u>, and public hearings on the new Plan are expected to commence before the end of 1978.

One of the <u>Goals and Objectives</u> of the 1973 Plan is to: "Preserve and protect agricultural uses and the natural resources within the City's area of influence in the Imperial Valley." The present Land Use Element includes four designations of residential use (in addition to various other urban designations), ranging from <u>Multiple Family High Medium Density</u> (not to exceed 20 dwelling units per acre) to <u>Agricultural Suburban</u> (not to exceed one dwelling unit per acre). The purpose of the latter designation is to act as an "urban edge" and to be applied in areas "...generally located outside of the existing City boundaries but within the City's sphere of influence..." According to the 1972 Land Use Survey, there were no





agricultural uses within the City, and only 10.74% of the total land area of the City was in the form of "vacant lots".

The 1978 Plan under Community Goals presents a new goal: "Provide for anticipated population growth and economic development due to geothermal energy exploitation, increased tourism, and other factors." Under Future Growth, there is this statement:

The population of El Centro is currently growing at about 2% per year. Projecting steady growth at this rate to the year 2000 would yield a population of about 33,000 or an increase of roughly 50% over the next twenty-three years.

The proposed Land Use Element of the 1978 Plan includes this statement:

Until recently, many cities have emphasized expansion into new areas rather than the recycling and more intense use of existing areas. However, over the years, experience and analysis have brought about a general acceptance that such an approach to accommodating growth can be expensive in providing services and facilities and add to the severity of a number of environmental, social, and economic problems.

It is interesting to note that the proposed Element does not include the <u>Agricultural Suburban</u> designation of the present Element. Instead, under <u>Objectives and Principles: Area of Influence</u>, it is stated that:

...it appears certain that a substantial amount of residential and other types of development will take place in the city's area of influence which is presently under County regulation.

A series of objectives and principles are proposed for such growth in the area of influence of which four are quoted here:

To develop a pattern of settlement compatible with efforts to preserve agricultural land and infrastructure.

To provide a variety of housing types ranging from rural to urban in character affordable by a diversity of economic groups....

To provide for anticipated population and economic growth due to geothermal development and other possible growth inducing factors....

To coordinate proposals with the County in order to administer plans in the immediate period prior to annexation.

Under The Existing City in the proposed Element, there is the determination that: "Because of a limited potential for further residential development within the city, large amounts of land outside the city's current boundaries will have to be developed." The proposed Element includes An Integrated Growth Management Plan, which includes this statement;

... The proposed plan for growth is based on the judgment that the city would likely have to accommodate at least 10,000 people over the next twenty years, but may have to accommodate as many as 30,000 people if explosive growth takes place.

A crucial element of the proposed plans for the area of influence is that the future expansion of the city will occur in a phased and timely and efficient manner. This is necessary to insure an adequate utilization of land in order to protect agricultural lands and to insure new development can be supplied with necessary municipal facilities and services efficiently at reasonable costs to the taxpayers of the community as a whole.

The Growth Management Plan includes a discussion of <u>Factors</u> In Growth Management and a <u>Development Rating System</u>.

Circulation Element

Two of the Principles of the adopted Circulation Element are:

- Each thoroughfare and its terminal facilities, including parking, be designed with sufficient capacity to accommodate anticipated traffic based on intensity of present and projected land use....
- The regulation of intensity of land use to keep the traffic generated in balance with the capacity of the arterial....

The circulation categories include <u>Freeways</u>, <u>Major Highways</u>, and <u>Collectors</u>. Under <u>Secondary Circulation System</u>, <u>Public Transit</u> and <u>Bikeway System</u> are presented. Under the latter heading, there is this statement:

The establishment of a bikeways system separated from vehicular and pedestrian traffic is a desirable goal. However, in a mature well-developed community this is not accomplished without cost.

An upgraded system of bikeways will require community support....

The proposed Circulation Element of the 1978 Plan includes a discussion of airports and suggests that the Naval Airstation, about seven miles west of the City "...could be an alternative for future airport expansion if a joint use agreement can be worked out...". However, the discussion continues by pointing out that, if the Airstation becomes a major civilian airport: "This may draw new residential land to the west into high quality agricultural lands and reinforce current westward population trends...".

Housing Element

Under Scope and Limitations of the adopted Housing Element, there is this thought-provoking statement:

... The numbers, types and condition of housing structures must be related to the quality of the environment and to the amenities and facilities within the community and individual neighborhoods that mean the difference in human terms between living or simply existing.

The results of the 1972 Housing Survey revealed that, of the total of 6659 dwelling units observed, 16% were in need of minor repair, 12% were deteriorating, and 1% were dilapidated.

Under Objectives and Principles, one of the Objectives is:
"To see that the area-wide environment for housing is protected and maintained so that a 'total living quality' exists." One of the Principles is: "Support governmentally assisted housing as an appropriate means to meet the needs of the lower income families within the city."

Under <u>Specific Recommendations</u>, there is a word of caution about strict enforcement of building codes:

... The demolition of unsafe structures that are in such poor condition that they imperil the health and safety of the residents is also handled with great discretion due to the fact that, as bad as these structures are, they represent shelter for people with extremely limited incomes.

The introductory section of the proposed Housing Element of the 1978 Plan states, in part:

...Because housing need is a function of the regional housing markets, local government should collaborate with other government agencies not only to address the local general market area housing needs, but to share in the collective responsibility for making adequate housing provisions for people in the region.

Under Five Year Projections of Market Rate Housing, the Element states that:

Assuming that population continues to increase at the current rate of 2% per year, and that average household size remains constant, about 726 additional housing units will be needed over the next five years....

Toward the end of the discussion of <u>Individual Planning Areas</u>, it is stated that: "Residentially zoned vacant land within the existing city boundaries is in limited supply...", and later on continues by saying: "...It is anticipated that development in the area of influence will commence in the west and will grow in a counterclockwise pattern around the city....".

Open Space Element

In the <u>Introduction</u> of the adopted Open Space Element, it is pointed out that:

Open space, publicly owned and maintained, and including local, community and regional parks, highway oriented rest and recreation areas and landscaped buffers between various land uses, are extremely important in an environment where weather conditions are as difficult as they are in El Centro. In summer, open space, properly landscaped and shaded, provides relief from sun and heat. Particularly during this time of the year, evening use of the spaces is most important....

One of the <u>Goals</u> is that the Open Space Plan shall: "d. Be coordinated with comparable plans of neighboring cities, county, the State of California, and the United States Government." One of the Recommendations is:

4. Any abandoned railroad or other right-of-way should be acquired by the city and developed as a 'landscaped linkage' between various parts of the city. These linkages could serve as pathways for bicycles and equestrian circulation.

Under The Existing Open Space the proposed Open Space Element of the 1978 Plan states that:

Valuable agricultural lands within the city and its area

of influence should be preserved for crop production and also to provide buffer space between urban development and the surrounding agricultural region.

Under <u>Implementation Program</u>, the proposed Element recommends the consideration of:

4. Agricultural Preserves: Voluntary enrollment by owners of local prime farmlands into agricultural preserve contracts will protect the continued use of these lands for agricultural open space. The Williamson Act, passed into law by the State legislature, is administered by the County. It insures that owners of prime farmlands will only be taxed for the agricultural use-value of their lands, in return for guaranteeing that the land will be kept in agricultural use for the term of the contract.

Conservation Element

In the Introduction of the Adopted Conservation Element it is stated that:

The major thrust of the city's conservation efforts, therefore, will be in the area of protecting those lands which have agricultural potential, while channeling growth in the direction of less productive lands or toward the more efficient utilization of land already urbanized.

Two of the policy recommendations listed in the Element are:

- 1. The city consolidate its growth within the areas indicated for urban uses, thus retaining the surrounding Class 1 (Prime) soils for agricultural use.
- 2. The city limit the utility services to those areas where they will be economically appropriate and adopt a policy to permit urban services only in those areas where urbanization will not inhibit agricultural pursuits and the activities that are normal thereto....

The proposed Conservation Element of the 1978 Plan is an expanded and much more complete revision of the adopted Conservation Element. It deals with agriculture and soils; geothermal resources; water and air resources; community and historic values; and energy conservation.

Two of the "consequences of growth" are presented in the introductory section:

- (1) Future population growth may lead to development of farmlands which will in turn affect wateruse patterns within the Imperial Valley.
- (2) Geothermal production could cause adverse impact to agricultural lands from either subsidence or increased seismicity....

Three of the principles under Agriculture and Soils Conservation are:

- -- To coordinate programs of action between the City, County and State, to insure the effective conservation of agricultural land uses within the region....
- -- To promote infill and cluster-type development so that unwarranted urbanization of outlying areas is curtailed.
- -- To coordinate geothermal development policies with the County and State, to minimize the impacts upon local agriculture.

Under the same heading, there is this statement:

Implementing land-conserving policies through the zoning and subdivision ordinances will help forestall premature expansion of the city into agricultural areas. The city zoning ordinance provides for an agricultural district requiring a 20-acre minimum lot size, and restricting residential development to 1 acre of the total parcel....

One of the principles under <u>Geothermal Resources</u> is: "To insure that the public is well informed about the effects of resource extraction and use."

One of the principles under Water and Air Conservation is:

To conserve a limited essential water resource (the Colorado River) which must provide for many communities and land uses throughout the Southwest United States.

Under Air, the proposed Element reports that in the El Centro area:

Particulate matter is generated by wind blow dry soils, particularly during the late fall, and during the dust storms of winter and early spring. Agricultural burning and cultivation practices contribute most of the airborne dust.

The objective of <u>Conservation of Community and Historic Values</u> is: "To maintain those community values and local historic places which provide a sense of continuity, and bring unique character to El Centro."

One of the principles under <u>Energy Conservation</u> is: "To encourage the use of passive solar design concepts as a way to reduce energy consumed for summer space cooling and for winter heating."

Scenic Highways Element

The <u>Introduction</u> of the adopted Scenic Highways Element reports that:

At present, the City of El Centro has provided for a wide landscaped area on the southerly side of State Route 8 freeway which lies in the southerly portion of the city. The landscaping of this area and the careful regulation of the northerly edge will place the City in an advanced position to request that the County adopt equivalent policies on controls and improvements that will assure the highest quality of development in the areas adjacent to this route.

The Element proposes that:

Several other routes within the City should be treated as local Scenic Highways, mainly through the control of outdoor advertising and the land-scaping of the median strips and edges. These routes would include Imperial Highway, Adams Avenue-4th Street and 8th Street. The improvement in the appearance of these streets through a program intended to beautify the approachways to the central area and the several residential districts would stabilize the value of all property in the City and reflect in sense of pride that all residents may enjoy by living in a community that cares about its visual impact on all who visit or are a part of its permanent population.

The Element includes several typical plans and drawings to illustrate methods of landscaping scenic routes.

Noise Element

The adopted Noise Element reports that transportation facilities contribute much of the noise in the El Centro area. Included are airports, trucks, autos, and railroads.

One of the <u>Policies and Actions</u> recommended in the Element is that:

The city should take measures to mitigate adverse effects of noise levels where such would be incompatible with existing or planned land uses or to adjust the land use pattern in relation to the noise source.

Seismic Element

Under Existing Faults in the adopted Seismic Element, it is reported that:

The cities of Brawley, Imperial, El Centro, and Calexico have within the last 35 years, received damage from the movements of major faults in the San Jacinto fault zone. These are the Imperial and Superstition Hills faults.

The Imperial Fault is located about five miles to the east of El Centro, and the Superstition Hills Fault is a few miles to the north.

Under Earthquake Intensities, the Element reports that:

El Centro is located in an area where there have been between 16 and 25 earthquakes that have produced a modified mercalli intensity of VI to VII in a given locality in the time interval 1810-1969. This information indicates in a very general way that when an area has experienced a certain number of occurrences of potentially damaging shaking in the last 160 years, it can be assumed that this same area might experience approximately the same level in the next 160 years. It does not indicate when quakes will occur and it does not indicate the level of shaking.

Safety Element

Under Goals of the adopted Safety Element, there is this statement:

The City must recognize that certain hazards exist in ordinary day to day living and thereby establish and recognize reasonable enforcement of land use, building, subdivisions, controls enabling the community to provide space around buildings, streets with sufficient width to accommodate daily travel and to serve as emergency routes for any disaster that could occur.

Public Facilities Element

In addition to the nine required elements, the General Plan includes an adopted Public Facilities Element. It provides for the educational, recreational, cultural, and governmental requirements of the City.

One of the <u>Principles</u> for <u>Parks and Recreation</u> is "The provision of accessible playground and public recreation facilities within suitable distance of all residential areas of El Centro."

Under Park Standards, the Element reports that:

National standards--arrived at after years of study by specialists in the field--indicate that cities should provide a minimum of 4 acres of neighborhood and community parks for each 1,000 persons.

One of the <u>Principles</u> under <u>Education</u> is: "Coordinate the use of school and park recreational facilities through cooperation to the mutual benefit of service, safety, convenience and economy."

The proposed Public Facilities Element of the 1978 Plan presents a new principle: "To coordinate the expansion of public facilities with the land use and growth management plan." The proposed Element includes considerations of the need for expanded water and sewer systems and the possible impact of large-scale geothermal development on the City's facilities.

Commentary

The City of El Centro has an impressive planning program. The General Plan, which was adopted in 1973, was well-prepared and consolidated into one document. In keeping with good planning practice, the Plan is now in the process of being amended to bring it up to date. All of the required elements are included in the 1973 Plan and in the 1978 Proposed Plan. One of the most interesting features of the 1978 Plan is that it includes an Integrated Growth Management Plan intended to serve as "...an instrument to provide...for the phasing and direction of growth..." for the City of El Centro.

The zoning ordinance is reported to be fairly consistent with the General Plan, although some work remains to be done. There has been strong commitment to the General Plan in the past. Some of the city policies are said to be in conflict; however, these conflicts may be eliminated or reduced in number when the 1978 Plan is adopted. The City has a significant rate of growth, and there is apparent support for the proposed Growth Management Plan as a guide for growth.

In regard to the California Desert Plan, there is interest in the possible increase in local tourism related to Desert recreation, and it is generally hoped that economic benefits will accrue to the City. There is local interest in energy conservation, geothermal energy resources, and solid waste disposal sites.

City of Holtville

Introduction

The City of Holtville is located in the southeasterly part of the Imperial Valley about 10 miles east of the City of El Centro. It is surrounded by agricultural lands and is bound on the south by the Alamo River.

The area of the City is about one square mile, and the area of the City's adopted Sphere of Influence is approximately $6\frac{1}{2}$ square miles. There is no BLM land within or near the City.

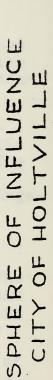
According to a 1975 Special Census, the population of the City of Holtville was 4,345; the current population is estimated to be at least 5,000. The annual growth rate during the period 1970-1975 was 4.9 percent, but the present rate of growth is believed to be levelling off. The economy of the City--like that of most of the cities in Imperial County--is strongly related to agriculture.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element is part of the <u>General Plan: City of Holtville</u> which was prepared by a consulting firm and adopted in 1973. The Plan also included Circulation, Housing, and Public Facilities Elements. A section on <u>Environment</u> included initial comments on conservation, open space, noise, and seismic safety.

The Land Use Element is brief and indicates that, in 1973, about 19.2 percent of the land in the City was undeveloped. The Land Use Plan is based upon a population projection of 4,500 persons by 1990. One of the proposals is for: "Long term improvement of areas along Alamo River for open space and recreational purposes."

A preliminary Land Use Element is part of a <u>Draft City of Holtville General Plan</u> which is being prepared by the planning consulting firm that prepared the previously discussed <u>Amended General Plan</u> for the City of El Centro. Much of the content of the Draft Plan for the City of Holtville is similar to that of the <u>Amended General Plan</u> for El Centro. The preliminary Land Use Element is much more complete than the





adopted Element and includes a <u>Growth Management Plan</u>. Under the heading of The Existing City, it is stated that:

The maximum anticipated population growth by the year 2000 is 6,000 people, which added to the current population of 5,000, yields a total population of 11,000 people...

Under Area of Influence in the draft Element, there is this statement:

The protection of prime agricultural land is one goal of the growth management plan. However,... the limited extent of Class I and II soils within the city's area of influence suggests that urban growth in almost any direction is acceptable....

The Element suggests that future growth should occur to the east and southeast. One of the proposed residential classifications is <u>Rural Residential</u>, which would provide for rural living. The desirable minimum area for this type of lot would be two acres, and it would serve as a transition from urban to agricultural uses.

The preliminary Land Use Plan designates Agriculture for most of the land beyond the present City limits.

The Growth Management program is described as:

...an outgrowth of the efforts by community leaders, not to stop growth and change, as to direct it and limit it to prescribed boundaries determined by community capabilities to relate people and their basic needs and demands for public services and facilities.

Circulation Element

The adopted Circulation Element proposes a system of <u>Arterials</u> and <u>Collectors</u> related to <u>Local</u> streets. As stated in the Element, the system "...will allow the community to grow in an orderly manner and at the same time provide access throughout the City with a minimum amount of disruption of other city services."

The Draft Plan preliminary Circulation Element presents a list of principles--one of which is: "To provide convenient access to all developed or readily developable property in the city." The preliminary Element also includes discussions of Regional Transportation Links, Street Upgrading, Public Transit, and Bikeway System.

Housing Element

The adopted Housing Element Housing Inventory reports that, in

1970, 39.4% of the City's housing units were in "average" condition, 5.8% were "poor", and .1% were dilapidated. Also, the number of persons per occupied unit was 3.5; and owner-occupied units accounted for 61.1% of the total housing units, while 38.1% were renter-occupied. The Element concluded that the housing stock in Holtville "...at the present time meets most of the needs of the community....".

The Element closes by stating, in part, that: "The information within this housing section should be considered as only an initial step in the development of a comprehensive housing element for the City of Holtville...".

The preliminary Housing Element of the Draft Plan reports that a 1978 Field Survey revealed a total of 1370 housing units in the City of which 968 (70.6%) were single-family structures. The Survey also reported that about 8% of the total units are substandard.

Under Low Income Needs Groups in Holtville, the Element points out the fact that about 20% of the total households in Holtville need housing assistance, yet 66% of eligible families are not being reached through housing assistance programs. The preliminary Housing Element is much more complete than the adopted Element.

Public Facilities Element

The adopted Public Facilities Element deals with parks and recreational areas; the City Hall; fire station; police station; library; and the schools. The Element includes discussions of <u>Public Facilities Standards</u>, <u>Public Safety</u>, and <u>Public Facilities Recommendations</u>.

The preliminary Public Facilities Element of the Draft Plan goes into much more detail and proposes this overall objective:

To coordinate, throughout the General Plan, the development of public facilities within the city and its area of influence, including fire stations and other public service buildings for the purpose of protecting the health, safety, and general welfare of all citizens.

One of the proposals under <u>Special Interest Parks</u> is that the Alamo River flood plain be used as a "long park". As proposed in the text:

...Parts of this River Front Park would be improved to urban park specifications while other parts would be more 'primitive' and would contain horse and hiking trails. In total, this park would contain more

than eighty acres and would adequately serve the needs of a city population in excess of what can be expected even under maximum growth conditions....

Noise Element

The City of Holtville does not have an adopted Noise Element. The preliminary Noise Element of the Draft Plan includes a list of noise principles -- one of which is:

To work in close cooperation with local farming and processing plants for the purpose of controlling source emissions through reasonable changes in operations, the location of activities, and other factors related to noise production.

Under Current Noise Levels, the Element reports that:

For the most part, current noise levels in the city's residential areas are acceptable. However, annoying noise levels occur in some residential areas due to sporadic intrusions of noise from loud speakers used for internal communications within the complex of farm product processing plants....

Under Future Growth and Noise Control, the point is made that:

If, as expected, the City of Holtville continues to grow, street traffic will increase and noise levels will become more severe. Conceivably, new industries attracted to the area by geothermal energy development or the expansion of existing industries may also degrade the presently tranquil environment of the city's residential neighborhoods.

One of the policies recommended in the preliminary Noise Element is:

The City should take measures to mitigate adverse effects of noise levels where such would be incompatible with existing or planned land uses or to adjust the land use pattern in relation to the noise source.

Commentary

The adopted General Plan of the City of Holtville is not complete, since it lacks the required elements for conservation, open space, noise, scenic highways, seismic safety, and safety. The adopted elements are not up to date and generally do not conform to State guidelines for the preparation and content of

local general plans. The current program aimed toward the adoption of a revised General Plan promises to meet the need for an adequate plan for the City.

There seems to be significant community interest in planning —at least to the extent that the need for a viable general plan is recognized. Most of the residents appear to favor a strong rate of growth, yet concede that some form of growth management is desirable. Although there is a need for additional housing, the local farmers do not seem to be willing to permit expansion of residential areas into agricultural lands near the City. The local desire for a "relaxed" community environment is being weighed against the desire for continued growth in the City of Holtville.

There is said to be a lack of local awareness about the California Desert planning program. The people feel that the nearby desert areas are their own playgrounds for camping, hunting, and general recreation, and they generally do not want to be crowded by large numbers of outsiders. There is considerable resentment about the demand for local public services created by out-of-county visitors to the Desert. Those who are aware of the Desert Plan program feel that it will be worthless if the Plan is not adequately implemented or "enforced". Most residents hope that there will be adequate economic benefits resulting from increased use of the Desert.

City of Imperial

Introduction

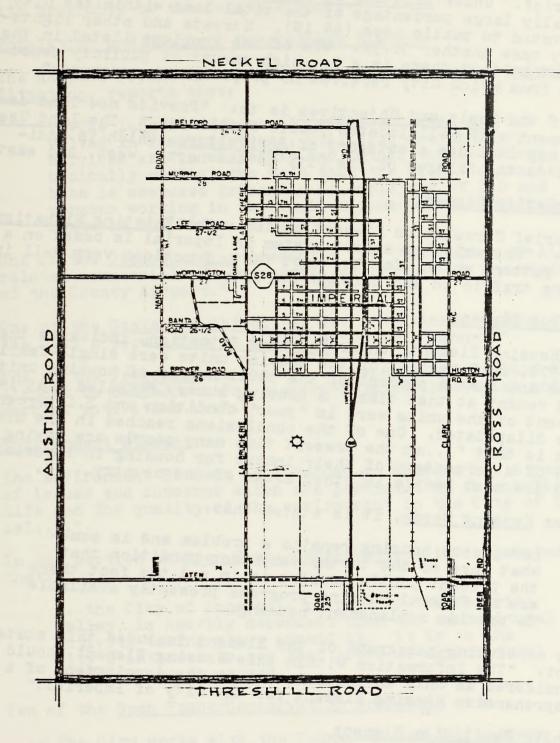
The City of Imperial is located about one mile north of the City of El Centro in the southerly part of Imperial Valley. The topography is flat, and the City is almost surrounded by agricultural lands.

The area of the City is 1.69 square miles, and the area of the City's Sphere of Influence is about 6 square miles. There are no BLM lands in the vicinity of the City.

The population of the City was estimated by the State Department of Finance to be 3,244 as of February, 1978. The City is a local retail and wholesale trade center serving the surrounding agricultural areas.

Land Use Element

The <u>General Plan of the City of Imperial</u>, which was prepared by a consulting firm, was adopted on June 27, 1973. In addition to a Land Use Element, the Plan includes Circulation, Housing, Public Facilities, Population/Economic Development, and Environment Elements.



SPHERE OF INFLUENCE CITY OF IMPERIAL



The Land Use Element (like the other Elements) is generalized and brief. Under Existing Situation, it is reported that an unusually large percentage of the total land within the City is devoted to public uses (44.1%). Streets and other rights-of-way take another 31.3%. One of the Problems listed in the Element is that there is a "...high amount of publicly owned-lands from which City receives no property tax revenues."

One of the Goals and Objectives is to: "Provide new land development with well located public facilities." The <u>Land Use Plan</u> map includes a category of <u>Agriculture</u>, which is indicated on the fringes of the City to the north, west, and east.

Circulation Element

The brief Circulation Element states under <u>Existing Situation</u> that: "The existing street system in Imperial is based on a grid pattern which, for the most part, functions very well in moving traffic in and through the city."

Housing Element

The Housing Element, under Existing Situation, indicates that, in 1970, 86.9 percent of the housing units were single-family units and that 6 percent of the total number of housing units were vacant at that time. A housing survey revealed that 14.9 percent of the units were in "poor" condition and 2.1 percent were dilapidated. One of the conclusions reached in the Element is that "...at the present time many people are paying less of a percentage of their income for housing in Imperial than are most people in other areas of the country...".

Under Housing Needs, it is stated that:

Low income housing remains a problem and is somewhat more so due to the very poor condition that the present public housing is in and the fact there are no Federal housing programs presently available to provide replacement housing.

The concluding paragraph of the Element includes this statement: "The information within this Housing Element should be considered as only an initial step in the development of a comprehensive Housing Element for the City of Imperial."

Public Facilities Element

The adopted Public Facilities Element deals with schools, public safety, public facilities standards, recreational facilities, and other municipal services.

One of the findings presented is that the schools within the

City are operating at capacity and that the existing elementary school is "...prohibited from permanent expansion due to its proximity to the County Airport."

Population and Economic Development Element

The adopted Population and Economic Element, under Existing Situation, reports that:

... The largest numbers of people employed are involved in communications, utilities and sanitary services and in wholesale and retail trade. These basically reflect the fact that the City's economic base is composed primarily of employees of IID and persons working in the various commercial establishments in the City...

One of the <u>Opportunities</u> presented is: "Expansion of Airport-related commercial and industrial activities in the vicinity of the County Airport."

One of the Goals and Objectives is: "Continued expansion of the City's population in a slow but steady manner."

One of the <u>Proposals</u> is that "...a general area around the Airport be called out for airport-related industrial and commercial activities...".

Environment Element

The Environment Element is intended to address "...a variety of issues and concerns which are pertinent to the quality of life and the quality of the environment in the City of Imperial....".

In the section on <a>Open Space/Conservation, it is pointed out that:

...the City of Imperial, as part of the Imperial Valley, is heavily dependent upon the agricultural activity taking place around it. It is to the City's interest to see that areas of agricultural activity are preserved.

Two of the Open Space/Conservation Proposals are:

- -- The City works with the County to develop uniform land use policies on urbanization....
- -- The City insures that as development occurs, provisions are made for parks and other open space areas.

The brief section on Seismic Safety reports that:

The Imperial Fault, located just a few miles to the west of the City, is an historically active fault and is considered responsible for the earthquakes in the area in 1940 and 1966. The worst earthquake was the earthquake in 1940 when several people were killed and 80% of the buildings in Imperial destroyed.

The section on <u>Transportation Noise</u> presents some general information about noise, and points out the fact that "... studies have not been conducted to determine the present noise levels within the residential areas of Imperial...." and adds this remark: "...Of special importance is the noise from the Imperial County Airport."

Commentary

Because it lacks the required elements for conservation, open space, noise, seismic safety, safety, and scenic highways, the General Plan for the City of Imperial is incomplete. The Land Use, Circulation, and Housing Elements need to be revised and expanded in order to bring them into conformity with State general plan guidelines. Community concern about inadequacies of the General Plan is not apparent, although some effort is being made to update the Housing Element.

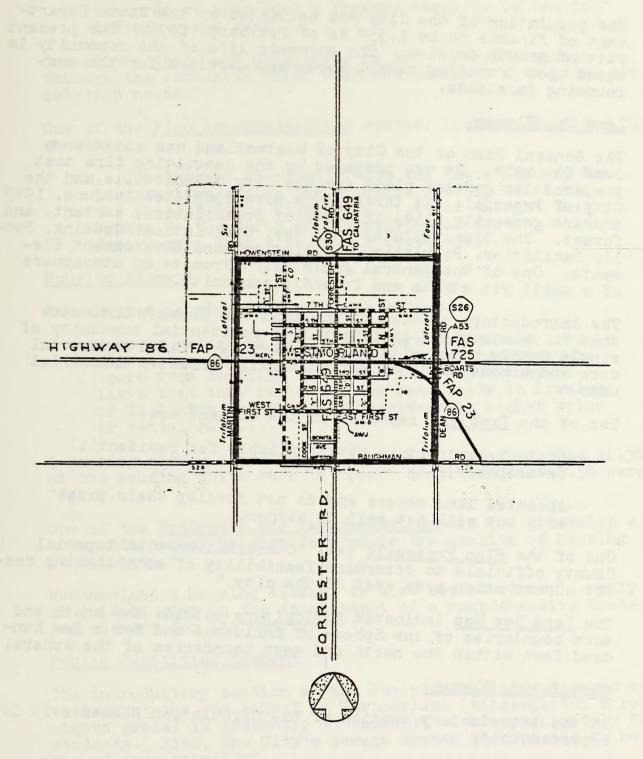
Local interest in planning matters is said to be moderate. Residents see the need for more industry, but seem to accept the present slow rate of growth in other forms of urban development. There is some support for a growth study or a growth management plan. In regard to the California Desert planning program, there are concerns about limited access to BLM lands, too many wilderness areas, the need for protection of archaeological sites, and transmission lines. Residents regard agriculture as very important to the local economy and are concerned about possible problems in regard to air quality and water quality. There is support for alternate forms of energy (particularly geothermal resources) and for protection of wildlife in the nearby desert areas.

City of Westmorland

Introduction

The City of Westmorland is located near the western edge of the agricultural lands in the Imperial Valley, and about 10 miles south of the Salton Sea. The land is flat, and the City is surrounded by farmlands. The City is bisected by State Highway 86.

The area of the City is about one-third of a square mile, and



SPHERE OF INFLUENCE CITY OF WESTMORLAND

the City's adopted Sphere of Influence contains one square mile of land.

The population of the City was estimated by the State Department of Finance to be 1,550 as of February, 1978. The present rate of growth is slow. The economic life of the community is based upon providing retail goods and services for the surrounding farmlands.

Land Use Element

The General Plan of the City of Westmorland was adopted on June 26, 1973. It was prepared by the consulting firm that prepared the general plans for the City of Holtville and the City of Imperial; all three plans were completed in June, 1973 and are generally alike in terms of organization, content, and format. The Plan includes Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Public Facilities, Population/Circulation, and Environment Elements. One of the general goals is: "Promote an atmosphere of a small yet stable and friendly community."

The introductory section of the Land Use Element indicates that "...Westmorland is primarily a residential community of single family homes with a local service-related commercial core and a scattering of agriculturally oriented industrial uses."

Two of the Problems reported in the Element are:

- --Lack of land within city available for residential development
- --Absentee land owners who do not develop their property but will not sell it either.

One of the <u>Plan Proposals</u> is: "Coordination with Imperial County officials to determine feasibility of establishing desert conservation area west of the city."

The Land Use Map indicates Agriculture outside the south and east boundaries of the Sphere of Influence and for a few hundred feet within the north and west boundaries of the Sphere.

Circulation Element

In the introductory section of the Circulation Element, it is reported that:

Much of Westmorland's viability as an important gateway to the Salton Sea recreational areas is its location along State Highway 86. The State is presentcation studying the possibility of developing a freeway through this portion of the Imperial Valley and eliminating the need for traffic to use Highway 86. At the present time such a freeway seems to be ten to fifteen years away....

One of the <u>Goals and Objectives</u> is to: "Provide access through the community which will not conflict with local circulation needs."

One of the <u>Plan Recommendations</u> states, in part, that the City should:

...Continue to coordinate with the State Highway Department concerning the possible freeway to replace the present State Highway 86....It is thought that a bypass to the north of the city would further this desire more than a southerly route would.

Housing Element

The adopted Housing Element reports that:

Housing values in Westmorland are relatively low.... This, along with other factors, discourages developers from building in Westmorland since they believe that they can build the same units in Brawley or El Centro and obtain a considerably higher price or rental rate....

A housing survey conducted in June, 1973 revealed that 21.3% of the housing units were in "poor" condition, and 9.5% were "fair".

One of the <u>Proposals and Recommendations</u> is to: "Develop a code enforcement program to upgrade the quality of housing in the city."

Westmorland's Housing Element is also described as "...only an initial step in the development of a comprehensive housing element for the City...".

Public Facilities Element

The introductory section of the Public Facilities Element reveals that the one school in Westmorland (kindergarten through eighth grade) is presently at capacity with approximately 800 students. Also, the City's sewage system is reported to be "...at over capacity".

Under <u>Problems</u>, it is reported that the sewer plant "...has good equipment but the city does not have the expertise to run it properly."

Population and Economic Development Element

In the introductory section of the <u>Population and Economic Development Element</u>, it is stated that:

Westmorland's population has been relatively stable over the past twenty years with little growth due to the agglomerating of farms in the area which has brought about a need for less people to work the agricultural lands rather than more people....

One of the <u>Problems</u> presented is the "...General decrease in number of people living and working in the agricultural lands around Westmorland."

One of the Goals and Objectives is:

--Develop policies which would encourage continuing as a city with a relatively stable, permanent population by widening opportunities for residents to find different housing types in the city as their needs and life styles change.

One of the Plan Recommendations is:

--City attempt to purchase land along the railroad right-of-way for the development of a city owned travel trailer park which would take advantage of the increasing number of recreational vehicles passing through the city.

Environment Element

The Environment Element includes discussions of open space, conservation, seismic safety, and transportation noise.

Under Open Space/Conservation, it is stated that:

... The city itself should take action to see that conservation efforts are made as the city grows to protect areas which have special agricultural potential and direct its urban growth into the areas of less productive lands or toward more efficient utilization of land which has already been urbanized.

One of the <u>Open Space/Conservation Proposals</u> is: "The City work with the county to conserve a portion of the desert areas west of the city as an example of a desert environment."

In the brief discussion of <u>Seismic Safety</u>, it is reported that: "Although Westmorland is not located on a known fault, it is

not far from the Imperial fault along which a serious earthquake occurred in 1940."

One of the <u>Seismic Safety Recommendations</u> is: "Inform public of potential structural seismic hazards."

Under Noise Measures, it is stated that:

At the present time studies have not been conducted to determine the present noise levels within the residential areas of Westmorland. It will be important, however, that such studies be conducted in the near future. Of special importance is the noise from the truck traffic along Center Street.

Commentary

Westmorland's adopted General Plan is not complete and, for the most part, does not meet State guidelines for developing local general plans. The City has not adopted the required open space, conservation, scenic highways, noise, seismic safety, and safety elements; and the adopted Land Use, Circulation, and Housing Elements are in need of up-dating. There is no perceptible community movement to solve these shortcomings, however.

Zoning, is said to be consistent with the General Plan. However, the <u>Implementation</u> section of the adopted General Plan asserts that the City's zoning ordinance "...is considerably out of date and no longer reflects the needs and desires of the people of the community...."

The rate of growth is slow, and there is no apparent awareness of a need for a growth management program. Perhaps because many of the City's public facilities are operating at or near capacity, the people of Westmorland are content with the present slow rate of growth.

Residents tend to be protective toward scenic values in the Desert and opposed to new transmission lines in the area. Preservation of agriculture is important as well as the maintenance of air quality. There is concern about any additional deterioration of water quality; drinking water is presently imported. Residents generally support the development of geothermal energy resources and support the management of wildlife for hunting values. The General Plan proposal for the establishment of a "desert conservation area" near the City indicates an interest in the evolving California Desert Plan.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element of the San Diego County General Plan was adopted on December 5, 1967. The Element has since been amended numerous times—the tenth amendment was adopted on December 14, 1977.

The text of the Element includes chapters on <u>Urban Land Uses</u>, <u>Nonurban Land Uses</u>, and <u>Other Land Uses</u>. The chapter on <u>Nonurban Land Uses</u> relates the most to that portion of San Diego County which is in the CDCA. As stated in the <u>Introduction</u>: "The areas designated for 'nonurban land uses' either are not expected to be needed for urban expansion, are not suited for urban development, or are needed for conservation purposes...".

Rural Residential applies to "existing small rural settlements as well as to areas that are suitable for a rural life style not requiring an urban level of service....". Part of the explanation of this designation is as follows:

Principles of justice and law dictate that every owner shall be provided with a reasonable use of his property. These same principles, however, provide that a public agency should control its own expenditures for the protection of the general welfare. Accordingly, the Element provides a reasonable use of the rural residential areas of a temporary nature, with provision for a more intensified use after 1990...

This designation allows a density range of one d.u. per 1 to 4 acres. It is applied to areas in the Borrego Springs community, for example.

Multiple Rural_Use is the designation for:

...lands not suitable for urban development even though the land is under 25 percent in slope and is not timbered. Generally the land is not highly suitable for agriculture although such uses are encouraged....

This designation allows a density range of one d.u. per 4 to 8 acres and is applied to lands in the Borrego Springs area and in the Ocotillo Wells area.

The Element includes two agricultural use designations: Agricultural Preserves and Intensive Agriculture. The former designation is for lands suitable for agricultural preserve contracts or open space easements. Large areas east of the

boundaries of the Anza-Borrego Desert Park are designated as Agricultural Preserves. The allowable density range is one d.u. per 8 acres. One of the Goals under Agricultural Uses is: "2. The protection of predominantly agricultural areas from scattered and incompatible urban intrusions."

Most of the CDCA within San Diego County is placed in the designation of State and Regional Parks (Anza-Borrego Desert State Park). The private in-holdings within the State Park boundaries are limited to a residential density of one d.u. per 4 to 8 acres. A relatively small area in the Borrego Springs community is designated for General Commercial which, in turn, is surrounded by several hundred acres designated as Medium Residential (7.3 d.u. per acre).

Circulation Element

The Circulation Element was adopted on December 5, 1967 and was revised on December 14, 1977 to include The Bicycle Network. It is interesting to note that Chapter 1: Road Network of the revised Circulation Element consists of only 3 pages of text, while Chapter 2: Bicycle Network consists of more than 9 pages of text.

Under <u>Road Network</u>, it is stated that the Element "...depicts corridors for public mobility and access which are planned to meet the needs of the existing and anticipated population of San Diego County....".

The classifications shown on the Plan are: Freeways, Prime Arterials, Major Roads, Collector Roads, and Recreational Parkways.

In the <u>Introduction</u> of the <u>Bicycle Network</u> text, there is this statement about bicycling:

...People of all ages are now cycling not only for recreation, but also for physical exercise and for transportation. The growing use of the bicycle, particularly for short and intermediate trips, is proving to be a viable alternative to the automobile. If properly planned routes are provided, the bicycle user can plan an important role in reducing traffic congestion and air pollution.

Three classes of bicycle routes are defined: <u>Bicycle Trail</u>, <u>Bicycle Path</u>, and <u>Bicycle Lane</u>.

Two of the several Objectives presented are:

1. Locate bicycle routes along designated scenic highways wherever possible.

2. Connect cultural facilities, recreation areas, and educational facilities by bicycle routes....

Under The Bicycle Network Plan, there is this interesting comment:

...It is the intent of the Bicycle Network that the routes be developed with an absolute minimum disturbance of the natural terrain....If in some instances it is necessary for the bicyclist to walk and push his bicycle this is preferable to a major adverse effect on the total environment.

The Bicycle Plan also deals with design considerations such as clearances, grades, safety, and signing.

Housing Element

The Board of Supervisors adopted the Housing Element on March 15, 1975. It consists of four chapters: <u>Introduction</u>; <u>Findings</u>; <u>Goals</u>; and <u>Policies and Action Programs</u>.

The Element addresses two major themes:

- 1. The impact of the present County regulatory systems on the provision of housing.
- 2. The provision of housing for families and individuals whose needs are not currently being met by the private residential market.

Under <u>Policy Issues and Approaches</u> it is stated that: "The predominant areas where governmental actions are required are in support of the provision of housing for lower income people."

In the chapter on <u>Findings</u>, it is stated under <u>Housing Conditions</u> that: "...poor structural condition of housing does not appear to be of widespread significance in the unincorporated area...".

The Housing Element is not of special importance to the CDCA area within the County, since only a small portion of the present and future housing units are within that area.

Open Space Element

The Open Space Element was adopted on December 20, 1973 and was revised on August 25, 1977.

Under General County Policy for Future Open Space Needs, it is stated that:

1. It is the policy of the County of San Diego to encourage all public agencies to consolidate their ownerships into manageable units. In order to do so, it will be necessary for these agencies to trade lands with private owners. It is the intent of the Open Space Plan that whenever land presently in public ownership is traded and thus becomes privately owned that the land shall contain only those restrictions that apply to similar private land in the general vicinity.

Two of the four General Open Space Goals are:

- 2. Conserve scarce natural resources and lands needed for vital natural resources and the managed production of resources.
- 3. Conserve open spaces needed for recreation, educational and scientific activities....

The Element presents several open space categories--three of them are relevant to the CDCA within the County: <u>County-wide Recreation Areas-State Parks</u>; <u>Other Publicly Owned and Public Utility Lands</u>; and <u>Agricultural Preserves and Open Space Easements</u>. The first category is applied to the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Two of its <u>Objectives</u> are:

- 1. Encourage the conservation of the habitats of rare or unique plants and wildlife.
- 2. Encourage the conservation of areas with sensitive plant life or irreplaceable, high quality plant and animal communities....

The second category is described as:

...land held in fee title or possessory interest by the federal, state, county or other local governments or public utilities that are not included in other categories but which have significant open space characteristics. Jurisdictions included are the Cleveland National Forest, lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management...

Under <u>Policies and Regulations to Achieve the Objectives</u> (of the second category), it is stated that:

Both the National Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management use multiple resource management policies to achieve the goals and objectives established by Congress. They attempt to acquire, on a priority basis either through purchase or land exchange, those private parcels which will contribute

materially to consolidation of land holdings. They dispose of property which does not serve a federal purpose....

Under <u>Future Implementation Programs</u> of the second category, this action is urged: "Actively participate with Federal and State agencies in developing policies for land use and management in the mountains and deserts." The second category is applied to large areas south and west of Anza-Borrego State Park.

The third category, <u>Agricultural Preserves and Open Space</u>
<u>Easements</u>, is described, in part, as areas:

...devoted to either agricultural use, recreational use, open space use, or any combination of such uses ...as defined by the Land Conservation Act of 1965 (the Williamson Act)...Agricultural preserves are established for the purpose of defining the boundaries of those areas within which the County will be willing to enter into contract pursuant to the Act....

Open space easements may be acquired from property owners willing to relinquish certain rights to construct improvements on their land as provided by Chapter 6.5, Section 51050 et seq. of the Government Code...

This category is applied to lands west of the State Park near the junction of County Highway S-2 and State Route 78 and west of Vallecito Stage Station along Highway S-2. One of the <u>Purposes</u> of this category is to "...allow the temporary or permanent holding of land for agricultural, open space, or recreational uses."

Conservation Element

The Conservation Element was adopted on December 16, 1975. It includes chapters on <u>General Conservation</u>; <u>Water</u>; <u>Vegetation</u> and <u>Wildlife</u>; <u>Minerals</u>; <u>Soil</u>; and <u>Cultural Sites</u>.

Under General Conservation, two of the policies are:

- 1. The San Diego County General Plan will include provisions for the conservation of natural resources.
- 2. San Diego County will monitor and issue a public report on the status of natural resources....

In the chapter on <u>Water</u>, under <u>Water Supply</u>, it is pointed out that:

...all of the desert and mountain areas, and much of

the foothill regions, have no water supply other than locally derived water. In those areas groundwater is the major water resource, as most surface water is too variable to be a reliable water source and rights to this water are held by local water agencies.

One of the Findings is:

There are no known active plans for introducing imported water to the eastern portion of the County, although there are no governmental policies to restrict the construction of an aqueduct in this area.

One of the Policies in the chapter on <u>Vegetation and Wildlife</u> <u>Habitats</u> is: "2. San Diego County shall coordinate with appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies to conserve areas of rare, endangered, or threatened species."

One of the Policies listed under Habitat Modification is:

10. San Diego County shall investigate the establishment of public Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) parks and encourage private ORV parks in appropriate locations.

One of the Findings in the chapter on Minerals is:

4. There are deposits of construction quality sand in the mountains and desert portions of the County. Where these deposits occur near highways or rail-roads, they may be of local or long-range importance to the extraction industry.

One of the Policies in regard to minerals is:

8. The County will, to the extent practical, protect and preserve mineral deposits and historical mining sites available for necessary commercial extraction, and for scientific, educational and recreational uses.

In the chapter on <u>Cultural Sites</u>, one of the <u>Findings</u> is: "5. It is estimated that only 5% of the existing archaeological and historical resources have been identified in San Diego County as of 1973."

Two of the Policies in this chapter are:

- 1. The County shall take those actions which will seek to conserve and protect significant cultural resources....
- 3. San Diego County shall coordinate with appropriate

Federal, State, and local agencies to conserve cultural resources....

Scenic Highway Element

The Scenic Highway Element was adopted on January 9, 1975. The Element includes four chapters: <u>Introduction</u>; <u>Findings</u>; <u>Goals and Objectives</u>; and <u>Policies and Action Programs</u>.

The chapter on Findings reports that more than 20 miles of State Scenic Highways have been officially designated in the County. One of the segments lies within the CDCA: an 18.2 mile long segment of State Route 78 within Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Finding 8 reports that: "San Diego County's scenic resources are gradually being diminished."

One of the <u>Objectives</u> is: "5. Encourage and promote increased coordination and implementation of the program among all levels of government."

Policy 3 presented in the chapter on Policies and Action Programs is: The County will encourage and support increased State and Federal incentives to local government for their cooperation and participation in the Scenic Highways Program."

The Scenic Highway System map indicates several proposed Scenic Highways with the CDCA. In addition to the previously mentioned State Route 78, these Scenic Highways are: Interstate 8, Old Overland Stage Route (S 2) from the Imperial County line to State Route 78, S22 from the Imperial County line to and beyond the westerly boundary of the State Park, and Coyote Canyon Road (SA 170) from S22 to the Riverside County line.

Noise Element

On February 20, 1975, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Noise Element. Major issues addressed in the Element include the role of the County in enforcing the California Airport Noise Standards and the need for an integrated land use and transportation planning program.

In the Introduction (Chapter 1), it is stated that:

... noise has not received the full degree of social concern that air and water pollution have received. Perhaps this is because it is the noise of others that bothers us, not the noise we make ourselves.

In the same chapter, under <u>Public Opinion</u> it is reported--according to an attitude survey conducted in the County in January, 1972--that: "Airplanes were identified as the most important single noise source, and motor vehicles were listed as the second most important source."

One of the <u>Objectives</u> is: "2. The support and enforcement of regulations to control noise at its source."

Seismic Safety Element

The Seismic Safety Element was adopted on January 9, 1975. In the <u>Introduction</u> (Chapter 1) it is reported that: "San Diego County, like all other California counties, faces the possibility of substantial damage from seismic and geologic activity..."

The chapter on <u>Findings</u> is a summary of the major findings of the research program for the County Seismic Safety Element. Two of the <u>Findings</u> are:

- 1. San Diego County is located in a region with significant seismic and geologic hazards including the San Jacinto and Elsinore Fault systems....
- 15. Seismic and geologic hazard zones identified within the County are partially on government-owned lands. Land trades that will increase the amount of hazard-zone lands in government ownership is compatible with the goal of this element....

One of the Objectives in the chapter on Goal and Objectives is:

5. Integrate into the planning and development review process, policies and programs that will observe the physical constraints of the region as they relate to seismic and other geologic phenomena.

One of the recommended actions in Chapter 4: Policies and Action Programs is: "Action Program 4.2. Encourage the trade or sale of privately owned land in geologic hazard zones into government ownership."

In Appendix A: Geotechnical Background, it is reported under Types of Ground Response: "...In San Diego County damage from actual fault movement is probably only of concern in the northeastern portions of the County."

The Element includes a <u>Faults and Epicenters</u> map which indicates that most of the seismic activity in San Diego County is within or near that portion of the CDCA within the County.

Public Safety Element

On January 23, 1975, the Public Safety Element was adopted by the Board of Supervisors. The safety hazards considered in the Element are related to fire, geology, and crime. The Plan proposes many policy and program recommendations to enhance public safety. In Chapter 1: Introduction, it is stated:

The area of jurisdiction for the Element is within the unincorporated County. Cities and public lands are not immune to hazards discussed in this Plan. Because hazards in one jurisdiction may spread and affect another, it is appropriate for the County to actively cooperate with other jurisdictions to reduce the risk to all citizens from hazards....

One of the findings in Chapter 5: Emergency Services relates to emergency situations in the CDCA: "Finding 4. Ambulance services in the cities generally provide a satisfactory level of care; however, ambulance services in rural areas of the county are either minimal or nonexistent...". The discussion of this Finding includes this comment: "...Ironically, most of the emergencies in these areas happen to residents of urban areas and tourists passing through or visiting recreational areas...".

Recreation Element

The Recreation Element was adopted on March 29, 1972 and revised on May 25, 1978. The Element consists of an Introduction; chapters on Local Parks, Regional Parks, Riding and Hiking Trails Plan and Program, and Off-Road Vehicle Plan; and a map entitled Recreation Element-San Diego County General Plan.

One of the Goals of the Element is:

Enhance the physical, mental and spiritual well being of County residents by providing opportunities for relaxation, rest, activity, education, and relationships with their neighbors.

In the chapter on <u>Regional Parks</u>, under the heading <u>State Parks</u> and <u>Federal Parks</u>, there is this important comment:

The state parks and federal areas are sufficiently large to meet most of the overnight demands in those months when the weather permits use of the mountains and deserts. However, because of limited day use facilities on the state and federal lands in the eastern portion of the County, driving distances, and climatic limitations, it was determined that even though such lands are vast, they do not and undoubtedly will not, satisfy all of the public's basic recreational needs. For these reasons such lands are not included as regional parks.

One of the <u>Findings</u> in the chapter on <u>Riding and Hiking Trails</u> <u>Plan and Program is:</u>

3. Many jurisdictions including federal, state, and municipal governments are involved in planning, developing, and operating public riding and hiking trails within San Diego County; however, very few miles of trail are in operation.

Three of the Objectives are:

- 1. Interconnect parks and recreation areas and trails planned by the County and other governmental agencies....
- 5. Blend trails into the natural environment.
- 6. Prevent unauthorized motorized use of the trail network....

Two of the Goals of the Off-Road Vehicle Plan are:

- ·Work with Federal, State, and local agencies to plan and implement ORV recreational facilities....
- ·Accommodate ORV activity with minimal adverse effect on the environment and non-users....

The ORV Plan includes a list of 32 policies to carry out the <u>Goals</u>; the policies relate to considerations such as air quality, noise, soil, biology, archaeology, and law enforcement.

Energy Element

On November 15, 1977, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Energy Element. As described in the <u>Introduction</u>:

The Energy Element is an attempt to rationally develop a strategy to direct actions within the County toward a more conservant and efficient use of its energy resources and plan ways to assure a reliable, adequate supply of energy....

The <u>Objective</u> of the Element is to: "Achieve maximum conservation practices and maximum development of renewable alternative sources of energy."

The chapter on <u>Policies and Action Programs</u> presents numerous tactics to realize the stated objective of the Element and actions necessary for carrying out given policies.

Specific Plan

A specific plan (SPA 0.5) for the Borrego Springs Specific Planning Area was adopted on December 16, 1976 as part of the County General Plan. The maximum overall residential density

for the 3,124 acre planning area, located about 10 miles southeast of the community of Borrego Springs, was limited to 0.5 dwelling units per acre with a maximum of 1,562 dwelling units.

Certain goals, objectives, and conditions were made part of the adopted plan.

Regional Growth Management Plan

On February 15, 1977, the Board of Supervisors directed that a growth management plan be prepared for the County. On June 14, 1978, a Final Regional Growth Management Plan was submitted to the Board by the Director of Regional Growth Management. The target date for adoption of the Plan is December 14, 1978. Hearings on the Preliminary Plan were held by the Board during April, 1978.

Volume I of the Regional Growth Management Plan (RGMP) contains chapters on Introduction, Plan Overview, Plan Recommendations, Land Use, Environmental Protection, Capital Facilities, Government Structure, Housing and Social Policy, Regional Planning Forecasts, and Economic and Fiscal. Volume II of the RGMP consists of appendices to the Plan.

The <u>Introduction</u> of the Plan states:

This is the growth management plan for the unincorporated area of San Diego County. The plan consists of a map showing where growth should occur, and implementing recommendations to assure that growth takes place in a manner consistent with approved goals and objectives. The timeframe for the plan extends through 1995.

One of the <u>Goals</u> presented under <u>Plan Overview</u> is: "Urban growth should be directed to areas within or adjacent to existing urban areas. The rural setting and lifestyle of the remaining areas of the County should be retained." In the same chapter, reference is made to Borrego Springs, which is within the CDCA:

Two Special Study Areas of the County have been excluded from the Plan. They are the desert area of Borrego Springs and the unincorporated portions of Otay Mesa. The desert area is unique in the County. In recent years, the Borrego Springs area has been subject to substantial development pressures. Due to the unique problems associated with development in the desert, the Borrego area should be the subject of a special study.

In the chapter on <u>Plan Recommendations</u>, a series of <u>Land Use</u> <u>Recommendations</u> are presented, one of which is that the <u>Rural</u>

Areas category should allow a minimum parcel size of 4 to 40 acres, depending upon slope and water availability. Another recommendation is that the RGM Land Use Map should be adopted as the County-wide Land Use Element Map.

In the chapter on Land Use, the RGMP is described as containing four land use categories: <u>Current Urban Development Areas</u>, <u>Future Urban Development Areas</u>, <u>Estate Development Area</u>, and <u>Rural Area</u>. These "primary" categories are supported by three other sub-categories "...to deal with development in unique areas." These categories are: <u>Country Towns</u>, <u>Environmentally Constrained Areas</u>, and <u>Special Study Areas</u>. Another recommendation is that the Growth Management goals, objectives, and policies be incorporated into the General Plan text.

The above brief description of the Regional Growth Management Plan suggests that, if adopted as part of the County General Plan, the RGMP will become a vital arm of the Plan and will strongly influence its role in guiding future growth in San Diego County--including that part of the County within the CDCA.

In the chapter on Regional Planning Forecasts, there is a table entitled "Population Ranges for Community and Subregional Planning Areas". The Desert Area is reported as having a 1977 population of 500 and a recommended projected 1995 population ranging from 600 (low) to 800 (high).

Commentary

San Diego County has a dynamic planning program. Several elements of the County's General Plan have been prepared, adopted, and/or amended within the past five years. The imminent adoption of a Regional Growth Management Plan as part of the County General Plan will probably have a strong effect upon the future of local planning and development in San Diego County's unincorporated areas. The format, organization, and content of the General Plan documents are of high quality and reflect an above-average level of professional planning. All of the State-mandated elements are included in the General Plan.

More work is said to be needed to bring the Zoning Ordinance into conformity with the General Plan; the task is a challenging one, since the Plan, which includes several community and subregional plans, contains approximately 110 land use categories, while the Zoning Ordinance has only 36 zoning classifications.

There is an apparent increasing public awareness of the need for long-range comprehensive planning in the County, although there is said to be a wide range of opinions as to what constitutes good planning. Proposition 13 apparently has had a double effect upon the County planning program: it has created a need for new planning studies and an increase in the planning department workload, but it has contributed to a reduction in size and availability of the planning staff brought about by a high rate of turnover in personnel.

Attitudes about the California Desert planning program appear to be favorable and positive. Most residents of the County now seem to realize that the Desert is slow to recover from damage and see the need for some controls in use of the Desert. There is no apparent opposition to Federal planning for the future of the California Desert; however, local planners should be kept up to date in regard to progress on the Desert Plan so that there will be few "surprises". At the same time, the Desert Plan staff should closely follow the progress of current work on the County General Plan and the Regional Growth Management Plan as they relate to the CDCA.

V. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The general plans of the 8 counties and 23 incorporated cities within the CDCA were reviewed earlier in this report. The results of personal interviews with key planning personnel of each of the 31 local governments were generally summarized in the commentary after each general plan review.

The purpose of this chapter of the report is to summarize the findings, to offer pertinent comments, and to present general recommendations as to how the preparation and implementation of the California Desert Plan may be coordinated most effectively with the existing and evolving local general plans within the CDCA.

Status of General Plans

California planning law requires that each local general plan shall include at least nine elements (land use, circulation, housing, open space, conservation, scenic highways, noise, seismic safety, and safety). Additional elements may be included which "...relate to the physical development of the county or city."

The general plans reviewed in this report display a wide variety in terms of compliance with the above-mentioned requirement. A majority of the plans (17) are without one or more of the mandated elements. Two of them lack all 9, 1 lacks 7, 3 lack 6, 2 lack 5, 2 lack 4, and two of the plans lack two of the required elements. Each of the remaining 5 plans are lacking one element.

The housing element was found to be the one most commonly missing--12 entities have not yet adopted this element, although State law required that it be in effect by July 1, 1969. The next most commonly lacking elements are: seismic safety (10), safety (9), noise (9), conservation (8), scenic highways (8), and open space (6). Five plans do not have a circulation element, and 4 lack a land use element.

It is interesting to note that many of the local governments within the CDCA believe their general plans to be inadequate to a considerable degree--to the extent that 6 of the 8 counties and 6 of the 23 cities are in the process of making major revisions in their plans. Unfortunately, several of those cities that have not yet adopted one or more of the required elements apparently do not intend to revise or up-date their general plans in the near future. Almost all of the planners who were interviewed indicated that Proposition 13 has caused

serious limitations in funds available for local planning activities.

As one might expect, the general plans of the less populated counties and cities tend to lack the most elements and are generally the most in need of up-dating.

Zoning Consistency

California planning law requires that local zoning ordinances must be consistent with local general plans. One of the questions asked during the interviews with key planning personnel pertained to the degree of consistency of zoning with the general plan. Responses indicate that most of the 31 local governments have zoning ordinances that are either "generally" consistent (6) or "moderately" consistent (14) with their respective general plans. However, a significant number of responses (11) indicated that considerable work needs to be done to bring zoning to a point of acceptable consistency with the general plan.

Growth

Two of the questions posed during the interviews were about growth in the community or county. In regard to the current rates of growth, the responses indicate that 18 of the cities and counties are presently experiencing above-average growth (an annual rate of 2% or more), and 13 are growing at a slow rate (less than 1% per year).

When questioned about community attitudes in regard to growth control or growth management, the greatest number responded that there is no apparent support for either growth control or growth management (22). Eleven responses indicated moderate to strong interest in some form of growth control or management. Two cities presently have moratoriums on new residential development.

Commitment to Planning

Another question asked during the interviews was in regard to community commitment to the general plan. Four responses indicated a strong commitment to the general plan, 16 indicated moderate commitment, and 11 suggested that public apathy prevailed in regard to the general plan and to planning in general.

Spheres of Influence

Obtaining information in regard to adopted spheres of influence for the incorporated cities within the CDCA proved to be a difficult task. Although State law requires that county

local agency formation commissions must develop and determine spheres of influence for the incorporated cities within their jurisdictions, two cities within the CDCA do not have spheres of influence. Many of the sphere of influence maps obtained for this study were out of date, were of unmanageable size, and were difficult to interpret. Some of the spheres take in land far beyond the probable lines of future urban expansion. while some sphere of influence lines probably should be extended.

Eleven cities have BIM lands within their present city limits, and 12 have BIM lands within their sphere of influence boundaries in addition to those BIM lands within their city boundaries. There are no BIM lands either within the city limits or the sphere of influence of 9 of the cities.

Concerns about the Desert

Some measurement of public concerns and opinions about the California Desert planning program and about the Desert itself was derived from the 31 interviews conducted with key local planning personnel. Those interviewed were asked to give their impressions of the concerns the people of their communities have about the California Desert.

The greatest number of concerns are related to protection of the Desert, although some of the opinions appear to be in conflict. Preservation of air quality was mentioned 13 times, and concern about water quality 11 times. Although support for additional wilderness areas was expressed 6 times, concern about "too many" wilderness areas was mentioned in 5 instances. Other concerns expressed were for scenic values (11), historical-archaeological sites (4), quietness (3), watershed protection (4), and "desert protection" (4). In regard to wildlife, only one concern was expressed for its preservation, while 6 were in support of management of wildlife for hunting purposes.

The broad category of recreation seems to be of widespread interest. Interest in such recreational uses as camping, hunting, rock-hounding, and ORV activity was mentioned 13 times. In addition, the interest in possible economic benefits to be derived from recreation-tourism uses of the Desert was expressed 12 times, and the need for ORV controls was expressed in 5 instances.

The interviews revealed considerable concern about matters relating to energy. Opposition to additional transmission lines was indicated 10 times; interest in energy conservation and alternate sources of energy 15 times (7 expressions of interest in geothermal energy); and 3 were concerns about energy plant siting.

One of the specific concerns most frequently mentioned was the need for coordination of planning for the Desert. This concern was brought up in 12 interviews and indicated that BLM planning efforts should be coordinated with local planning--particularly county planning--as much as possible.

Additional concerns which were less often mentioned, but which appear to be of some importance, are preservation of agriculture (7), freedom of access to public lands (5) BLM land trades (4), solid waste disposal (3), and mineral rights (3).

Recommendations

The findings of this study provide a basis for the following recommendations:

- 1. Before the preliminary California Desert Plan is released for public review, it should be presented to key planning personnel of local governments within the CDCA. Informal presentations of the preliminary plan should be arranged so that local planners will be provided ample opportunities to make constructive comments before it is too late. The purpose of an early review is to promote understanding of the plan, to encourage involvement in its preparation, and to develop support for the plan proposals.
- 2. The Desert Plan staff should keep abreast of the progress of local planning programs. This study has revealed that most of the counties and many of the cities within the CDCA are in the process of making major revisions in their general plans. Significant changes in these plans are likely to have profound effects upon future use and management of BLM lands in the California Desert. Some of these changes may lead to changes in the Desert Plan itself.
- 3. Once the Desert Plan is approved, its implementation should be carefully coordinated with the implementation of local general plans. Because BLM land holdings are generally intertwined with private land holdings in the CDCA, the BLM and local planning agencies will do well to keep each other informed about important plan implementations such as land trades, large land subdivisions, major rezoning actions, large private developments, and major public projects. Timely coordination will be of mutual benefit.

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